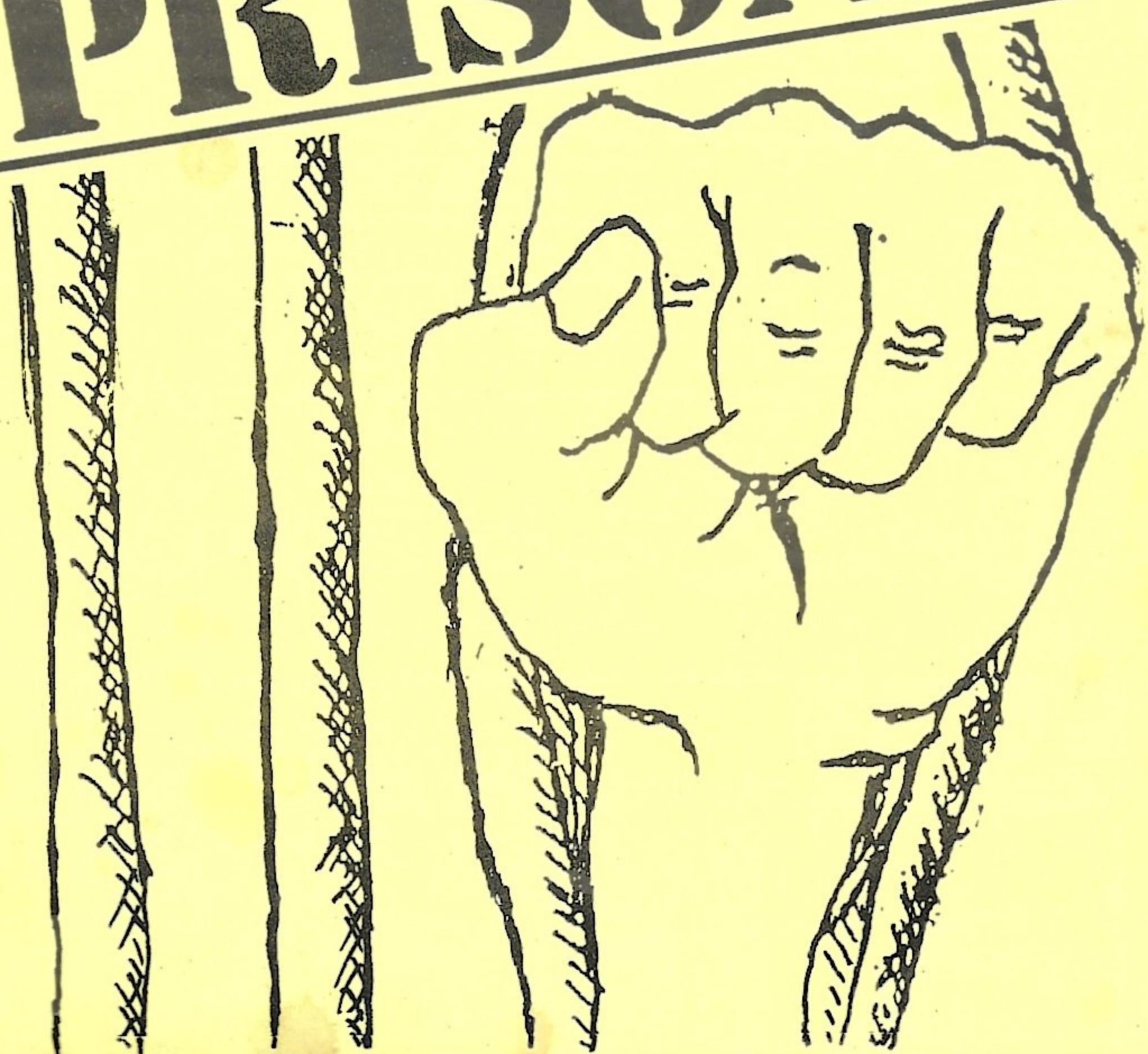


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SCOTTISH PRISONS:



LIFT THE LID!

A FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM! PAMPHLET

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Andy Baker - 'Another Death at Glenochil'
Terry O'Halloran - 'Hunger Strike at Barlinnie'
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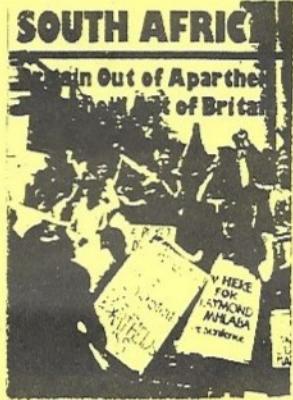
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PREFACE

From Albany to Peterhead Britain's prisons are in a state of ferment. Many are ready to erupt at any time.

In Scotland one week alone in April 1985 saw another youth found dead in his cell at the Glenochil complex, a mass-protest against curtailment of visits at Longrigg-end Youth Remand Centre, and a strike against slave-labour at Dumfries Prison.

The Scottish Prison System is facing an unprecedented crisis as ever-widening sections of the working class are driven into desperate poverty. More and more people are finding themselves at the sharp edge of the state - its police, its courts and its prisons. In increasing numbers the unemployed and destitute find themselves remanded or sentenced to prison for non-payment of fines. Many youth driven to crime by heroin or poverty, land in the notorious death-camp at Glenochil.

Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!, newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist Group, has carried a series of articles on the crisis and conditions in Scottish prisons since the mass-protest at Peterhead in January 1984. This pamphlet brings together this coverage with other new material in order to describe what goes on inside, what steps the ruling class is taking to contain resistance, and to show that we must support prisoners in their fightback for basic human rights.

Paul McKinlay - November '85



1. SCOTTISH PRISONS -LIFT THE LID!

The 'Free World'

Defenders of bourgeois democracy always insist that, however imperfect, Britain and other imperialist countries are still freer than the 'imprisoned' 'totalitarian' societies of the rest of the world.

In fact the Western European countries are locking up on average each year 1 person in every 200, with the United Kingdom far exceeding any other country. This has been borne out by the British Government's own figures issued in 1985.

UK: HIGHEST NUMBER OF PRISONERS IN WESTERN EUROPE

	Ave daily prison population	Per 100,000	Country	Total number of people imprisoned during year (1982)	per 100,000
England and Wales	43,500	90	UK	152,248	274
Scotland	5,052	101	Belgium	21,196	212
Six Counties	2,453	164	Italy	128,846	207
UK Total	51,005	93	West		
			Germany	123,395	199
			Holland	23,900	184
			Spain	56,730	153
			France	74,427	140
			Portugal	7,762	78

Prisons of Third World dictatorships are presumed to have worse conditions than Britain. 'Midnight Express', the book and film of a white middle class American's experience of imprisonment abroad, typifies Western fears of getting the wrong side of the authorities in Third World countries. It is a startling account of the appalling conditions in Turkish prisons. What gets forgotten though, in this view of the Third World is that in an important way the backwardness of these prisons has left them more humane than the prisons of the 'advanced' imperialist countries. Most often prisoners find that within the outer walls they are left to associate freely in courtyards and other communal areas.

The modern bourgeois prison system pioneered by Britain, and adopted by other imperialist countries, has swept this away, enclosing inmates in halls and galleries and reducing open-air recreation time to a minimum. Now it is remoulding itself to include control units - psychologically-based regimes. The system is becoming more and more calculating in its denial of human rights and dignity. Denial of freedom is not enough. Prisoners must be systematically degraded and demoralised. Prison Officers describe themselves as being in the 'frontline' of a 'war against crime'. Few people believe prisons are there to reform, but the myth of the authorities good intentions is peddled by highlighting the Barlinnie Special Unit and the few other examples of relaxed regimes - regimes which exist precisely because of the generalised deprivation and repression throughout the rest of the prison system.

Faced with the very obvious fact that bourgeois prisons do not reform, but only prepare inmates for further spells back inside - the prison system is then justified as containing crime in the form of the 'dangerous violent criminal' who preys on the ordinary person in the street. In reality, Britain's racist anti-working class prison system contains and runs through its mill people who have got on the wrong side of a system that cares nothing for people's needs in its scramble for profits for the rich. The big-time thieves and violent thugs are the ruling class and their mercenaries in the army, police and prison service.

The bourgeois prison system does not exist to defend the ordinary person in the street. Nor is its primary purpose the effect on the individual prisoners it punishes and represses. The purpose of the prison system and the treatment it metes out, is to terrorise the working class.

Scottish Prisons Today

In Scotland today - for men - there are 13 prisons, 6 Young Offenders Institutions, a Young Offenders Detention Centre, and a Young Offenders Remand Centre. For women there is Cornton Vale - adult prison, Young Offenders Institution, and remand centre - on the one site.

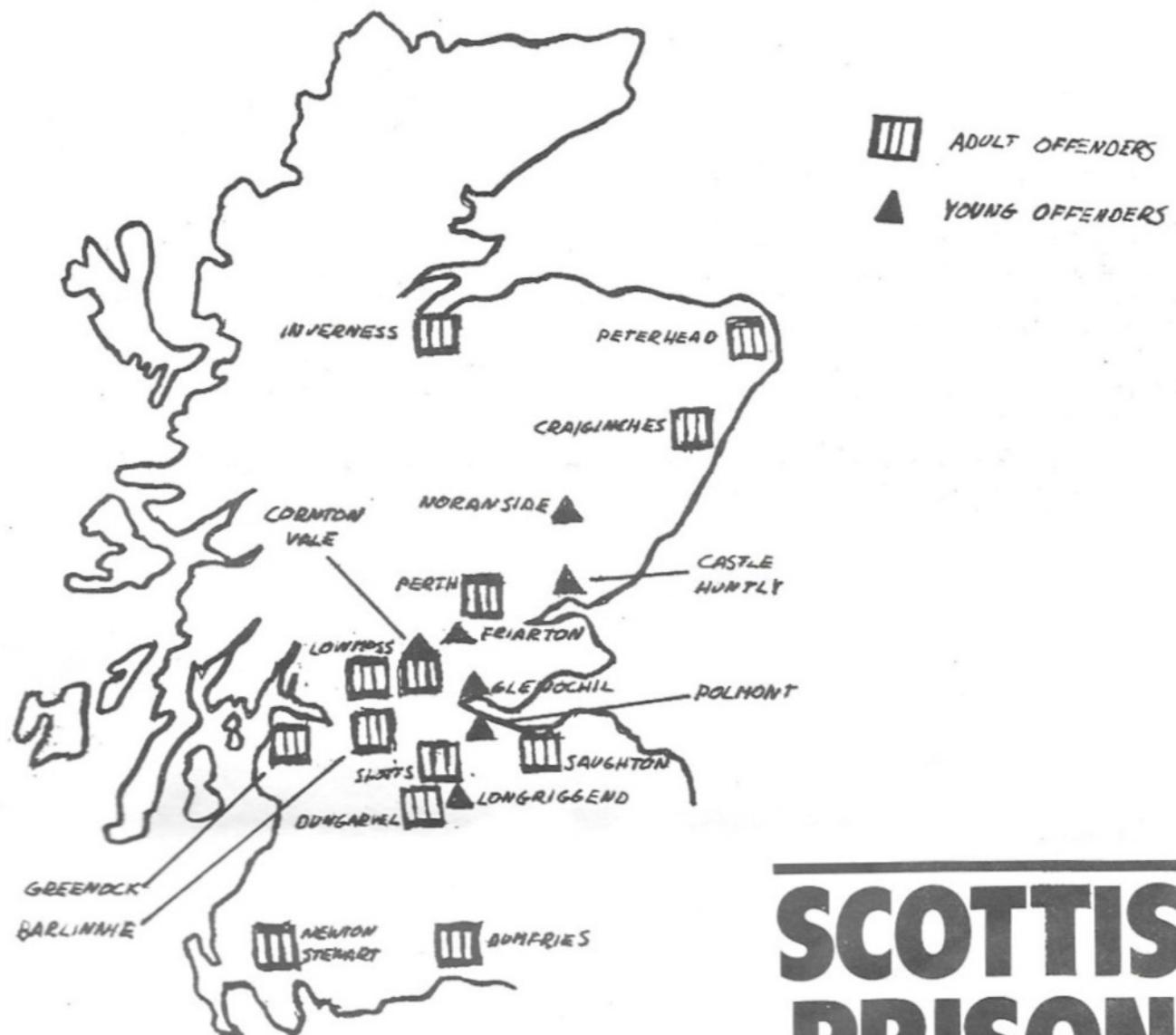
For men there is one specifically long-term prison, for sentences over 18 months - Peterhead. Some other prisons, particularly Perth and Barlinnie, take large numbers of long-term prisoners.

For 1983 the Scottish Home & Health Department gives the average daily prison population as 5,082 (the highest average since 1978), and the year's peak at 5,285 in March. Total admissions are given as 15,286 and the average sentence 199 days. The daily average for remands was 863 - a 10-year high.

A prison staff increase of 220 was projected between April '84 and April '86. At 31st March there were 2,843 staff of whom 2,350 were governors, prison officers and medical prison officers.

All of this in a country of 5 million people. 1 in a thousand are in prison. Nearly 1 in 330 are admitted in the course of a year. In poor working class schemes the number going through the mill is much higher, so much so that at any time most people will have friends or relatives confronting the sharp edge of the state - its police, its courts and its prisons. While the bourgeois media focusses on the so-called 'violent men' in prison, most people are being sent there for non-payment of fines for charges like 'breach-of-the-peace', or for theft or housebreaking.

While the ruling class piles up nuclear weapons, and eagerly arms its army and its police with more and more deadly equipment in order to maintain its rule, they attempt to portray prisoners and other working class people as being responsible for any violence in society. Prisoners doing time for violence, in most cases, have acted in the heat of the moment, and a great many of them under the influence of alcohol. Other offenders are inside for armed robbery and the like - offences against property. In class society prison is a weapon of class rule. Most prisoners are 'social' prisoners who would not be inside but for their class background.



SCOTTISH PRISONS

The Mean Machine

'They're there with their navy blue uniforms - white shirt and wee blue tie, and their wee peaked blue hat. Half-a-dozen of them standing about waiting to process you.'

You're taken up to this desk. She's waiting behind and you're standing, and you stand in a line, wait your turn, and don't talk. (If you talk you get a bollocking.) You wait your turn and wait a long time because they have all these forms that they must fill in.'

(former remand prisoner describing admission to Cornton Vale Women's Prison)

Prison is a machine to destroy your personality. On admission you are given a number, and treated like one. You are given the same drab monotonous clothes as everyone else with scant regard to size and none whatsoever to shape. If you have any illusion that your prison number serves any useful purpose for you, say for example a sort of postal code, you will soon run into fellow-inmates arriving from other prisons who have lost all contact with friends and relatives who don't yet know where they are.

Every day is the same. Up around 6 to slop out and wash. Then breakfast. A couple of hours work in the morning. Lunch. Recreation for up to an hour. Tea-time. An hour or so's TV in the evening - what they want you to see. A couple of hours association at other times during the day. Locked up in your cell by 8.30pm and lights out by 10 or 10.30pm. All of this with lots of locking and unlocking in between - always at the same time. The only exceptions are Sunday when association and religious services replace work-time and recreation, and for women prisoners the morning allowed for laundry.

What little exercise is allowed is used as another excuse for drilling prisoners. At Glenochil this is literally what happens - polishing shoes in the yard and marching up and down. Elsewhere prisoners are just expected to fall into line and walk round and round in circles and always in the same direction. You just don't upset things by doing anything else.

Prison is designed to turn people into vegetables incapable of independent initiative and unable to do the most ordinary everyday things. No wonder so many prisoners find themselves back inside again and again, and some find themselves put into control units or Carstairs State Hospital.

In 1980 Sheila Garvie described the effect of 10 years imprisonment on her, in an interview with the "Daily Record":

'in the early days, weeks and months after my release the gift of freedom was rather like the gift of a complicated computer toy to a three-year-old child...

...I slowly began to realise I was making my own little sitting room into a new prison for myself...

'...It is only now, after 18 months of freedom, that I am beginning to adjust to a normal way of life. During that time I married but it was a disaster.'

Conditions

This statement was made for Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! in April '84 by Ricky Wrethman on his release from Peterhead, in explanation of the major protest in A-Hall that year:

'...the events in January was a culmination of indignation at the primitive conditions that exist at Peterhead.'

ONE: Lack of recreation facilities. One TV. One pool table, table-tennis table between 150 men in A-Hall.

7
TWO: Food - monotonous, lack of vitamins, pilfering of rations by turnkeys working in the cookhouse. Always cold and eaten in the cell.

THREE: Sanitation - primitive, bad drainage, smell of urine and excrement overwhelming.

Slop out in the morning - very cold conditions, carry water into cell washing etc.

FOUR: Visits - intimidating presence of turnkeys during visit listening in to conversations.

Taking down visitors' car registration numbers for police to check out.

Strip-searching after visit - internal. Also strip-searching of visitors - pretext given that they may be carrying contraband. What happens: they are held incommunicado till police arrive then taken away and strip-searched.

Visits last two hours after travelling nearly 200 miles!

FIVE: Censorship. All letters and progressive literature sent to Prison Dept., Edinburgh or to the political police at St. Andrews House for censorship. You can only write to your own MP, and family and friends (their own rules at Peterhead!)...

...One more thing I never mentioned are the medical thugs, including the doctor who has stitched up many a split head (men lying unconscious in the punishment block after a heavy doing over by the turnkeys) - he just turns a blind eye, also in alliance with the trick cyclist (psychiatrist) he has had men certified and sent to the State Mental Institution at Carstairs.

And not forgetting the wide abuse of mind-controlling drugs, freely given if one just asks the turnkey without going through the doctor, though he approves of it...

Conditions are actually worse than this in most local prisons, and are so chaotic in Barlinnie that in 'C' and 'D' Halls convicted, remanded, adults and youths are all mixed in together - contrary to prison regulations.

Worst of all are the remand wings where there is permanent overcrowding in men's prisons. 3 men to a cell is quite 'normal'. Recreation is almost non-existent. Most prisoners get none before they have completed 60' vs. The only work on offer consists of 'domestic duties' - taking a mop up and down a corridor. There is a lack of sanitation on hospital wards. These were all findings of the Scottish Prisons Inspectorate in September '82 looking into conditions for remand prisoners in Barlinnie, findings it then sat on for 18 months, allowing the Scottish Office to think up some 'improvements'. In this time the remand population at Barlinnie continued to increase at a staggering rate - from 258 to 460!

Much needed and long overdue improvements have been made fitting out new kitchens in the remand area to allow food to be served hot, but the main thrust, as ever, of the system's 'improvements' is in the technology of repression - the organisation of MUFTI squads to attack protesting prisoners and the fitting out of punishment 'observation' cells to throw them into.



At a press conference announcing the Inspectorate's findings and the Scottish Office response the Director of Scottish Prisons said he was unable to put up a 'house full sign and was authorising less recreation and more repression in order to pack more and more remand prisoners in. Prisons Inspector Barry called Barlinnie 'a very efficient operation required to function under considerable pressure, from which there is never any respite'. No doubt also an apt description of Hitler's concentration camps!

With the exception of certain specialised regimes - the Barlinnie Special Unit, Dungarvel and Cornton Vale Women's Prison - prisoners convicted and remanded, find they are left to rot in disgusting conditions. In December '84 a former prisoner wrote to Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! describing what it's like for convicted prisoners in Saughton, a 'training prison' and as such better than most:

'Dear FRFI,

Having served a short sentence in H.M. Prison Edinburgh, I feel compelled to write about conditions inside the prison.

Firstly there is the overcrowding. A cell measures approximately 12' x 8' x 10' high. Originally built for one man they now have three men squashed in together with next to no ventilation. There is a small pot for each man to use as a toilet. If one man has to use this during the night the smell can almost make you vomit. If a man has to shit during the night he must rip up part of his sheet or towel into a small square then wrap up the shit and throw it from his window outside. If caught he will be placed on report and lose remission.

While I was in Saughton, five men lay in the prison hospital with salmonella food poisoning. After speaking to another prisoner who worked in the kitchen, I discovered that fridges and pantries were never cleaned and had a foul stench in each. Also there is literally thousands of cockroaches thriving in the kitchens. He also told me that when we have chicken they are left out overnight to defrost, which must be quite a sight - cockroaches having a midnight feast on defrosting chickens - the chickens are washed in cold water then cooked and given to the inmates, you can bet that none of the screws eat chicken in the jail.

Another disturbing thing was the number of people who caught crabs, 45 men. If you get crabs, the prison is of the opinion that the man brought them in with him. You are put in isolation for 3 days and your genitals are sprayed with disinfectant. You are put back in circulation and after a quick wash so is your mattress, sheets and blankets all ready to infect the next guy who uses them.

There is also the petty vindictiveness of the screws to put up with each day, such as delayed letters and papers or sometimes they are completely mislaid.

One experience I had with the screws was when I asked to have a visit with my brother. I was in A-Hall he was in D-Hall, it is a simple matter of taking me into D-Hall and locking me in a cell with my brother for 20 minutes. I asked for the visit and was told to see the P.O.. I asked him and was told to go on request, I asked to go on request and was told to see the P.O. on the next shift, I saw and was told to go on request, I saw another screw about going on request, he nodded and told me to leave it with him. This same sequence I repeated for three days asking the same screws and P.O.s and getting nowhere until I gave up. Needless to say



I did not see my brother, but I know that it is a fairly common event for relatives to visit each other while serving a sentence together.

Finally, on being released from prison a full packet of cigarettes and box of matches which I had purchased outside were not returned to me. When I asked for them the screw said:

"They have been dumped"

"Smoked you mean" I said

"Perks of working in the reception" he chuckled.'

Steve A (Edinburgh)

Prison 'Work'

'Provision of useful occupation or employment for inmates is an essential element in the penal regime.'

(Prisons in Scotland Report 1983 - Scottish Home & Health Department)

Prison work is soul-destroying slave labour performed literally for a few pennies. Most jobs are of the treadmill variety: sewing mailbags, stripping copper wire, washing floors and the like.

The Scottish Home & Health Department's own statistics give the lie to its claims to provide 'useful' employment. In the year to 31st March '83 it was unable to employ 22.6% of prisoners. Remand prisoners with the option not to work do not voluntarily offer themselves as slaves. The 1983 Report, which notes an increase in value of manufactured goods and services of £745,000 up to £3,420,000 (average value per inmate employed of nearly £1,500) has nothing whatever to say on the subject of remuneration. Nor has any previous report for that matter.

Far from providing socially useful work of benefit to the prisoner and the public, supplies to non-government bodies have declined to a quarter of the total value of production, with most of the rest being consumed within the prison service itself. Only 4.6% of prisoners are recorded as being involved in trade and vocational training. What is provided is very limited in choice - at Barlinnie and Perth: Bricklaying, or Painting & Decorating, and at Peterhead: 'General Constructional Skills'. Only 0.6% of prisoners in the year ending March '83 were being given what the SHHD calls 'Training for Freedom.'

In a letter on 12th December '84 Peter Wardlaw described prison work in Peterhead's B-Hall Control Units:

'there is no work here, just a ritual humiliation which is mandatory(!). For an hour and a half, once a week, two prisoners are allowed out and given mops and buckets. The work is the floor, the ablution arches and the hot plate area. There is nothing at all edifying about, and of course that is not the purpose. It is just one more way of making prisoners submissive to the regime, and also it saves a lot of work...'

If the face fits...

Prisoners whose faces don't fit are systematically victimised. Control units have been built at Peterhead for prisoners designated 'subversive' and 'violently disruptive'. Actual behaviour has little bearing on who ends up where, as Peter Wardlaw explains. In the manner of the Inquisition prisoners are persecuted for who they are and what they think:

'My position is that I have not been co-operating from the beginning. I should not be in here, having been involved in no 'riots' or used violence against anyone.'

Peter Wardlaw is in prison for his political activities as a Scottish Republican. Commenting on a year in isolation, he wrote:

'...I should point out that I started protesting here because they were, are taking my 'wages' off me and thus restricting my correspondence. If they had left me in peace I wouldn't have bothered as I was (am) on my own in this respect.'

On his release in June '84 Frank McPhie, in an interview with the "Glasgow Herald", explained the systematic victimisation that goes on at Peterhead:

'Frequently some officers taunt the prisoners by expressing support for the National Front. Some prisoners who support the National Front appear to get small privileges - more letters, things like that. I don't take a political interest at all but that sort of thing is annoying when it happens constantly.'

Some of the other grievances concern the security prisoners who are regarded as especially difficult. They have a red light burning constantly in their cells and there is an observation hatch on their doors. The prison officers make a point of lifting the hatch and closing it very loudly every hour so that these prisoners never get a proper sleep. It goes on and on and is done deliberately.'

These men do not have access to the physical training class and that annoys them. They are shifted constantly from one cell to another. They are never allowed to settle. They are under constant escort and in the same working party where the work is very boring and repetitive. They are marched up and down all day.'

Letters and Visits

The prison regime seeks to restrict and manipulate prisoners' contacts such as they still exist. Prisoners on punishment and unable to buy letters get only one letter out each week. This is favoured as an underhand way of victimising political prisoners, like Peter Wardlaw. In bourgeois society democracy only exists for those that can pay for it.

The authorities discourage contacts with non-relatives. Sometimes they encourage family contacts for cynical reasons. Usually they don't care. John Gallagher, now in Perth, having been suspicious for some time, stopped all correspondence when he found three prison officers sitting round reading a letter from his sister.

Many prisoners lose contact with friends and relatives. The closed visiting conditions of Barlinnie and the distance of Peterhead from the main population centres, aggravate the problems of the meagre visiting allowance provided. Only last summer this was increased from 18 to 24 visits per year, and only after the major protests and exposure of conditions forced by prisoners at Peterhead. In January this year Mick McCallum went on a month's hungerstrike drawing attention to closed visiting conditions at Barlinnie. Visitor and prisoner must bob their heads up and down during these visits to communicate, the head going down to speak through the metal grille, then up to catch the other person's facial expression through the plate glass, and of course this prevents all physical contact. At Peterhead visits last between 1 and 2 hours, at Barlinnie half to three-quarters.

In its 1983-84 Annual Report the Families Outside Project gives an account of a mother's visit to her son serving life in Peterhead prison. Travelling from Glasgow by public transport with only a snack to keep her going, she describes her ordeal:

'It's 1.15 when we reach Peterhead jail and as I step off the bus with the three other women I can hear, in the whirling white mist, the doleful sound of a fog-horn. How the butterflies in my tum really take over. Visiting doesn't start till after 2 o'clock. After the third ring at the bell a face appears at a hole in the door and says "Well?" I silently indicate my pass. Five minutes later we are admitted to a surprisingly small waiting room. Now that the one hour visit is almost a reality I try to rationalise my thoughts as to what I will and won't say....Now it is time. My name is called. I have to leave my bag at the reception desk, first taking my purse out. There are things in my bag more valuable than my purse. No receipt. However as a second-class citizen (a con's mother - the con's are third-class) I don't seem to have any rights. I can't even protest for fear of my son getting the kickback. David is already there

seated at a table sectioned off to accomodate six visits and wide enough to prevent any body contact. This stretches the length of the room and is overlooked by three prison officers on a dais at one end. This, in such a small space effectively precludes any possibility of private conversation. A big smile and we go through the preliminaries of how everyone is.

As I look at his white, hag-ritten face my grief and helplessness to right this intolerable situation in which we both find ourselves rises up and chokes me, and I find myself babbling utter drivel to ease the strain. In what seems less than five minutes it's "Time up" and out we go, still smiling at each other. I collect my bag and the other door is opened to usher the visitor out. But wait! There is a small group of cons walking away from the visiting area. Could David be among them? I hesitate for one last glimpse, but am asked sarcastically, "Right missus. Do you want out, or would you like to stand here and wave to your son?"

It's the last straw. Now I stumble over the step and I can let the tears flow.

It's 3.20 and the bus doesn't come till 4.15. What do I do. Best just walk up and down. Please, God, don't let anyone talk to me. It will be easier on the train...I finally arrive in my own house at 9.30pm shattered, demoralised, knowing that it will be the best part of a week before I can unwind.'



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2. DEATH CAMPS MUST GO!

Deaths and Injuries in Scottish Prisons

'On Friday 22nd March after 43 hours under police siege in a transit van, James Baigrie, aged 34, from Fife, died. He had escaped from Saughton prison, Edinburgh, 15 months before, where he was on a life sentence.

More than 120 police were drafted into Philbeach Gardens, Kensington where the siege took place...

... He had no food or water and kept himself awake with amphetamines. His main demand, should he surrender, was to be moved to less severe conditions than at Saughton to continue his sentence. There is no evidence that this demand was even considered by the police or Home Office.'

FRFI April '85

James Baigrie took his life in the full glare of publicity. Many others inside are quietly being driven to the same end by the same inhuman prison conditions. Long-term prisoners know, if caught, they face months of solitary confinement and possibly years of lost remission but many still try to escape. They are the 'living dead'.

John Buchanan resolved to kill himself if he got more than 3 years. Recently he got a 6 year sentence and committed suicide in Barlinnie. The Scottish Home & Health Department's own statistics admit a doubling of prison suicides and self-inflicted wounds for the period 1980 to 1983.

Official figures given in Parliament give suicides in Scottish prisons as 7 times the average in the general population, running at 3 each year for the period 1976 to 1981. Since then this situation has worsened. In 1983 suicides in male prisons stood at 9 times the average, Young Offenders Institutions 18 times and the Glenochil complex a staggering 48 times the average for the general population.

The number of injuries in prison is horrendous. In November 1983 statistics were given in Parliament relating to assaults on staff and prisoners, figures which are certainly grossly inaccurate, but do point to strange and disturbing goings-on in the prison system.

Between 1980 and 1983 the rate of alleged assaults on prison officers nearly doubled, but the number reported to the police remained the same, and the number actually resulting in prosecution fell drastically - from 40% to 8.1%. Of course no statistics have been provided for assaults by prison officers on prisoners, and it is unlikely that any are kept. Recorded assaults on inmates, we are left to presume, are inmates attacking each other. These have almost trebled. Numbers, however, referred to the police have remained the same, but the total prosecuted has declined by a third.

In 1983 suicides in male prisons stood at 9 times the average, Young Offenders Institutions 18 times and the Glenochil complex a staggering 48 times the average for the general population.

Something big is being covered up!

What is being covered up is an extremely repressive and violent prison system. Brutality is not only rife - it is organised with the approval of the authorities, and is rubber-stamped by the Visiting Committees, kangaroo-courts which will punish any prisoner who tries to bring a complaint against a prison officer. In Barlinnie the MUFTI-squad (storm-troopers dressed in riot-gear) were called on 10 times in March 1985 to attack groups of prisoners. Violence is so much a feature of this prison that prisoners have been set upon in front of members of the public. Recently, a prisoner, accused of shouting, had his visit terminated. He was then seen being dragged away to hospital with blood streaming from both eyes.

In Barlinnie prisoners known to be suicidal are being left to die. After an unsuccessful suicide attempt by slitting his neck, a prisoner was patched up with 14 stitches and promptly moved up to a third-floor landing. Needless to say his next attempt was by jumping off the landing, and he is now crippled. A new year of deaths in Barlinnie began in 1985 with a fire in Arthur Padden's cell. Prisoners rang the alarm bells but the staff took 20 minutes to open up.

Prisoners have begun to fightback against brutality in Barlinnie. 1984 saw a rooftop protest and 1985 began with a hunger strike on this issue. Due to leave prison in April Mick McCallum went on hunger strike for 40 days up to 1st March:

'...Mick went on hunger strike to protest against the deaths and injuries in Scottish prisons; the threats and assaults on himself; censorship of prisoners' mail; and harrassment of visitors and the inhuman conditions of closed visits.'

Dumbarton District Council have voted to support Mick's demands, particularly that for an inquiry into the rate of deaths and injuries in Scottish prisons. The Scottish Council for Civil Liberties and five MPs have called for an

inquiry. The brutal character of Barlinnie prison officers was demonstrated during a picket in support of Mick McCallum. A prison officer's car came out of prison with a placard in the window reading "Hang McCallum". The pickets were organised by the Scottish Prisoners' Support Committee which includes FRFI supporters.

Mick McCallum, announcing his decision to end the hunger strike, said: "The hunger strike has achieved the aim of giving publicity to abuses in the Scottish prison system..."

Mick has also said that Tommy Kelly has gone on hunger strike in Saughton from 1st March.'

FRFI March '85

Another Death at Glenochil

On 16th February 1984 William McDonald, an inmate at the Detention Centre of the Glenochil complex, was found hanging in his cell. William was due out the following week. The Glenochil complex has been in the news time and time again - William's death being the fourth within 18 months and the twelfth within a decade.

The Fatal Accident Inquiry which is required by law after a death in custody, is a charade which is used to put people's mind at ease. However, more and more people are wanting to know about what is happening behind the bars of Scottish prisons. Former victims of Glenochil say that the law of the jungle prevails. Far from any attempt at rehabilitation or improvement, the regime at Glenochil only strengthens gang rivalry, the rule of force and 'divide and rule' wins the day.

The sheer misery and terror that could drive a young boy to his death less than a week before his release can hardly be imagined - his parents quite rightly want to know why a petty offence led to such a grotesque punishment for their son.

The Scottish Office has consistently refused the use of a public inquiry into prison deaths for fear of the facts that would become available and the truth that would be known.

As Irish youth are the victims of British rule, as black youth are the victims of police harrassment, William McDonald was as surely a victim of the Scottish penal system.

FRFI March '84

...And Another...

In January 1985 Home Secretary Leon Brittan announced the extension of the 'short sharp shock' Glenochil regime to all 18 Detention Centres in England and Wales. The following week Angus Boyd was found dead, hanging in his cell in Glenochil Detention Centre, the sixth to die at the complex since 1981.

The Fatal Accident Inquiry when eventually it gave its verdict several months later, highlighted the strange fascination he had developed with the occult. Unlike the court and the judge who avoided the obvious guilt of Glenochil and the callous class society it serves, Angus Boyd had no choice but to find some kind of escape from the reality of his miserable existence.

Diagnosed schizophrenic 10 days before his death, the court then only needed to criticise the inadequacy of suicide precautions. Mental illness real or otherwise, is always a handy let-out for the authorities. As the consultant psychiatrist who made the diagnosis on Angus Boyd admitted:

'It was a little difficult to come to any diagnostic conclusions. I was a bit perplexed. This was a young man who had been previously in the prison with no sign of psychiatric problems.'

His social worker called him: ' a youth in conflict with society'. Society in the form of Glenochil decided to make his life not worth living. Refusing to shave or otherwise conform to the 'Yessir' 'at-the-double' 'spit-and-polish' regime he was thrown into solitary for the last 2 months of his sentence until he decided to end it all. Murder!

Glenochil Crisis

The public exposure of conditions at Glenochil and the protests following the death of Derek Harris have shaken the Government's system of 'short sharp shock' Detention Centres for young offenders. This system has been pioneered at Glenochil and spread to centres in England and Wales by a government intent on terrorising working class youth who rose up in cities throughout Britain in the summer of 1981 and have risen again in 1985. Revelations by probation officers in England and Wales of the routine beating of young inmates has added to calls for change. What is now needed is a public campaign based among the dispossessed sections of the working class who are directly affected, and drawing in all who wish to close down these killer camps.

Such has been the outcry at last about deaths in Glenochil, that the Scottish Office-appointed 'Working Party on Suicide Precautions' has felt bound to gain credibility by breaking the terms laid down for it, and has called for changes in the regime at Glenochil, and in sentencing policy. A minority of this body even called for the Glenochil complex to be closed, so discredited is it by the pall of death that hangs over it. The majority rejected this on the grounds that they were afraid of transferring the problem somewhere else. This is a crisis in the prison system. Unfortunately the main organisations of the working class, the Labour and trade union movement, do not see this as an important issue to which they should give much attention. The push to close the killer camps has to come from elsewhere.

No More Deaths! Close Glenochil Now!

At a press conference on 5th March 1985 Mr Philip Barry, Inspector of Scottish Prisons said:

'the inspectors had found no evidence of an oppressive regime either at the young offenders institution or the detention centre at Glenochil...

The regimes there, he said, appeared to be positive and purposeful... the inspectors found morale amongst inmates high with many complimentary towards the regime. The staff the inspector found to be caring people. He apparently has done the rounds.'

Scotsman 6th March '85

As he spoke a Fatal Accident Inquiry was still being made into the death of 17-year old Angus Boyd, and a month later on 13th April '85 16-year old Derek Harris from Aberdeen was found hanging in his cell - the seventh death at the Glenochil complex since 1982, and the fifth within its Young Offenders Institution section. (The YOI is strongly influenced by the 'short sharp shock' regime of the neighbouring Detention Centre and staff have been interchangeable between them.)

Despite concentration by the press on Derek Harris' traumatic background and psychological problems, there has been a public outcry with all sections of opinion left of the Tory Party calling for a public enquiry.



Glenochil

On Friday 26th April '85 the Gateway Exchange in Edinburgh organised a 150-strong public meeting on the 'Crisis in Glenochil' which not only brought together various concerned professionals and some political groups behind this call for a public enquiry, but also heard statements about the regime in Glenochil from ex-inmates, who made it clear that many others would say the same but for the fear of going down again. The Governor of Glenochil, Mr Spencer, sat quietly and anonymously throughout until someone misquoted him near the end. The bourgeois press has not considered their statements fit to publish. FRFI does:

'NO EVIDENCE OF AN OPPRESSIVE REGIME'

'Their favourite trick to bring you down was at the end of the night, when they would come in to get your clothes, they would strip you naked then make you lift your hands up in the air and turn right round and lift one foot off the ground at a time so they could see the bottom of your feet, but then came the coup de grace, they made you bend down and touch your toes, then one of them would lift his foot up and put it on one cheek of your arse at a time and push it to the side, all the time this is going on they are making comments about the size and shape of your body, it's a real bring-down that leaves you numb with shame and anger, but there is always so many of them you know you're beat before you start so you either do it the "easy way" or the "hard way", then you had the screws who would come in to check your cell to make sure you had cleaned it, some of them would come in with dust already on their fingers and ask you what it was, what could you say?'

(from written statement by late '70s Glenochil DC inmate - A)

'If you've no got the guts to stick a rope round yer neck you've just got to stick in and do it.' (your sentence)

(recent Glenochil DC inmate - B - out 7 weeks)

'We were beaten up for the first three weeks just to show who was boss. Three guys who went in at the same time as me tried to do themselves in.'

'POSITIVE AND PURPOSEFUL'

'then you had what was known as the "Magic Square". They had a bit of the floor in front of a pillar that was about 2 foot by 2 foot and they would make you scrub that one bit of floor for maybe a couple of hours at a time, and there was always the screw who would "accidentally" knock over your scrubbing bucket that was full of water, then start to shout at you as if it was you who had knocked it over.'

(ex-inmate-A)

'MORALE AMONGST THE INMATES HIGH WITH MANY COMPLIMENTARY TOWARDS THE REGIME'

Ex-inmate-C described how admission to Glenochil DC in 1978 was designed to break the spirit:

'I was beaten up for one hour, and made to write a letter home what they told me to, then I was given dinner...'

We were beaten up for the first three weeks just to show who was boss. Three guys who went in at the same time as me tried to do themselves in...

...You don't step out of line when there are visitors. They don't do anything at the time, but afterwards...'

'THE STAFF THE INSPECTOR FOUND TO BE CARING PEOPLE. HE APPARENTLY HAS DONE THE 'ROUNDS'

'The Inspector never came to see us.' (recent ex-inmate-B)

'D' also only out 7 weeks, has described the staff's caring approach:

'I was thrown to the ground, dragged along and up the stairs for talking. You can't go to anyone in the place.'

A public enquiry into Glenochil is not enough. It must be closed now. Until it is closed the deaths will continue, and between 100 and 200 youths be placed on suicide watch every year. The Scottish Council for Civil Liberties has been receiving similar accounts of the regime in Glenochil for the last 10 years - both the Young Offenders Institution and the Detention Centre. It cannot be reformed as ex-inmate-C has explained:

'There was only one decent screw. Everybody said so. He left. He had to. He couldn't conform to the way the rest of them were carrying on.'

FRFI May '85



3. PETERHEAD PRISONERS FIGHT BACK

Is Anybody Out There?

'I'm writing this from the solitary confinement block in Peterhead where all 15 cells are full. Over the last 2 years we've written petitions to the Secretary of State (only goes as far as the civil servants) complaining about conditions here. No-one has even listened to us. As a result we took part in a peaceful demo for which we are locked up on solitary awaiting disciplinary charges.'

The facts of life are that sanitary conditions are appalling; one three-minute shower a week - there are a great many cells so small that a man cannot stretch out his arms fully. The way the food is served is unhygienic. We know that the public are told how well prisoners are kept and we want to make it clear that this is far from the truth. All we are asking for is basic standards of cleanliness and existence...'

letter smuggled out to the Glasgow Herald - printed 7th Nov '78

Prisoners, still being ignored the following year, were forced to draw public attention to their grievances by other means - by destroying the punishment block themselves and staging a rooftop protest on top of it. They then found more attention paid to their applications to the European Court of Human Rights based in Strasbourg, but conditions remained the same and the Scottish Office began building control units.

Further protests and increasing resistance and solidarity between prisoners was needed before any moves were made on conditions, and in January '84 resistance to the increasingly repressive regime at Peterhead mounted into a major protest which the complete destruction of the inside of A-Hall, and another rooftop protest, this time against the screws attempts to retake the hall by storm.

Much nonsense was talked by the Scottish Office and Buchan & Banff MP Albert McQuarrie who represents the Peterhead prison officers. The following letter was smuggled out of the prison marked 'To Whom It May Concern (Is Anybody Out There?)', and eventually appeared in the Scotsman on 5th March '84. It proved to be the opening shot of a campaign by the protesting prisoners to turn the tables on the establishment's own campaign of repression and propaganda:

'The riot in A-Hall this month (January 1984) was not a spontaneous act of destruction for the hell of it. All the governors and chief officers were forewarned as long as a month before the actual riot that A-Hall was ready to explode.

Many of the men in A-Hall are simply living in constant frustration. A-Hall, particularly security status prisoners, some of whom have spent the past decade on this status, have less privileges than any other prisoners anywhere in Scotland. There are far more important issues to be brought out besides privileges of a trivial nature. Hope! We need some of it with a capital 'H'. We are all suffocating in our own apathy in 'A' Hall. Parole is merely a word other people converse about. In 'A' Hall it is a non-event.

The only people who gain anything from our present state in 'A' Hall are the warders and governors. The more dangerous we are made out, the more glorified their job seems and the more money they receive. Every warder in Peterhead made a profit as a result of the riot. In their minds, overtime comes way ahead of any form of compromise for us. We are human beings, you know, with mothers and fathers, wives and children, just like you! They need hope too. Ask them what it is like to travel from 6 am till 10 pm to share an hour with their husband, son, dad or whatever. During the visit there's no privacy at all. Warders watch every move. A table with a glass barrier separates man and wife, and so on.

There's no compassion, not a shred of it. To warders, we are not real people, neither are our families. The general public are not really aware. They are fed propaganda rather than reasons why Peterhead on the whole is the worst example of prison reform in Europe, if not the entire Western world. A big statement to make, but nonetheless who can argue with it.

Scotland is meant to be pioneering the new prison units and is claiming the Special Unit works where all else fails. Jimmy Boyle is a walking advertisement and constantly advocates the methods employed in the Special Unit. Why then have the Government just spent half a million pounds building a segregation block for ten men in Peterhead. Are we going back to the darker side of prison policy.

If men are to change for the better it can only be done by constructive progressive policies such as the Special Unit. As things are in 'A' Hall, and Peterhead in general, we are in limbo - the living dead.

The public are paying for every failure such as the riot. They would be far better paying for a success. The problem won't go away, it is like a cancer. If left to fester it will eventually prove fatal. The public should be allowed to inspect prisons, to have freedom of information on all prison matters. Open your eyes out there to what's going on in the

SIR - I'M WRITING THIS FROM THE SOLITARY CONFINEMENT BLOCK IN PETERHEAD WHERE ALL 15 CELLS ARE FULL, OVER THE LAST 2 YEARS WE'VE WRITTEN PETITIONS TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE (ONLY GOES AS FAR AS THE CIVIL SERVICE) COMPLAINING ABOUT CONDITIONS HERE. NO ONE HAS EVER LISTENED TO US. AS A RESULT WE TOOK PART IN A PEACEFUL DILLY DALLY PROTEST WHICH WE ARE LOOKED UPON SOLITARY AWAITING DISCIPLINARY CASES. THE FACTS OF LIFE ARE THAT SANITARY CONDITIONS ARE APPALLING, ONE THREE MINUTE SHOWERS A WEEK - THERE ARE A GREAT MANY CELLS THAT ARE SO SMALL THAT A MAN CANNOT STRETCH OUT HIS ARMS FULLY. THE WAY THE FOOD IS SERVED IS UNHYGENIC. WE KNOW THAT THE PUBLIC ARE TOLD ABOUT HOW WELL PRISONS ARE KEPT AND WE WANT TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THIS IS FAR FROM THE TRUTH. ALL WE ARE

likes of Peterhead. Don't listen to silver-tongued Ancrum (Scottish prisons minister) telling you how humane the place is - a 100 percent failure. If it were a business enterprise the Tories would have shut the doors long ago.'

Peterhead Showtrial

At Peterhead High Court on Friday 22nd June 1984 sentences totalling 45 years were handed down on 12 of 14 prisoners singled out on charges of 'mobbing and riot' for their part in the mass-protest at Peterhead prison in January.

Alan Brown, Frank Halliday and John Gallagher all got 6 years to run concurrently with their life sentences. Consecutive sentences of 3 years were imposed on Alec Howat (serving 8 years), Fraser McDowall (7 years), Frank Ward (7 years), and Thomas Beveridge (6 years). John Stewart (5 years) got an extra 18 months and John Will, due for release, an extra 2½ years. The jury returned 'not proven' verdicts against Frank McPhie and William Elliott. William 'Toe' Elliott appeared at the trial on 'dirty protest'.

Over £250,000 was spent staging this court-room farce, designed to shift the blame for violent confrontation away from the prison system itself. This trial has rubber-stamped the state's mounting campaign of intimidation and repression against prisoners who refuse to accept inhuman conditions.

RIGGED TRIAL... The prosecution was allowed 79 witnesses without any fuss. When the defence called for 85 defence witnesses, Secretary of State for Scotland George Younger refused. 11 prisoner witnesses have been assaulted by prison officers and now face assault charges. Judge Lord Ross prevented discussion of prison officer provocation and of prison conditions and refused to admit evidence about events before 6 am, 9th January when the protest began. He said 'this is not a public enquiry'. Vital photographic evidence from the press was withheld from the defence until the last week of the case. The siting of the trial one and a half hours north of Aberdeen and 6 hours north of Glasgow thus prevented many relatives, friends or concerned groups from attending. The state has quite deliberately placed its worst hell-holes - Peterhead and the Inverness cages - furthest from public view.

Despite these conditions the prisoners exposed the state's hypocritical indignation about danger to life and property and revealed how their lives and few possessions are under constant danger from the prison system itself. Fraser McDowall said:

'Any incident and they come in and beat up people indiscriminately. Whoever is in front gets it, they just don't care.'

REPRESSION... The January protest was in response to the repression in Peterhead: nightly cell searches after lock-up; degrading internal body-searches before and after visits and frequent interventions by the MUFTI squad. John Will was severely beaten up by two prison officers 24 hours before the protest, and hospitalised for 6 weeks with crushed ribs.

As usual the state has tried to pretend that the protest was the work of a few 'disruptive' prisoners led by 3 'ringleaders' - Alan Brown, Frank Halliday and John Gallagher. Despite this attempt to single out these three comrades the revelations about terrible conditions and brutality have been embarrassing for the Scottish Office which was glad to see this '2-month' trial reduced to six weeks. The Glasgow Herald described Peterhead as 'dangerously diseased'. Lord Ross felt obliged to say that 'resentment about prison conditions' did not justify 'law-breaking'.

John Gallagher, described as the 'ringleader' responsible for thousands of slates thrown at prison officers, was shown in press photographs hanging from the roof under pressure of two hoses directed at him from close range. Gary McMenamin said:

'it was an out and out case of attempted murder.'

He saw it all from the punishment block. He was badly beaten up before his appearance and John Gallagher had to demand in court that he receive medical attention.

Prison officers' evidence was the usual mixture of lies and contradictions: one claimed to have watched monitor screens for nine hours without eyestrain (two hours is the normal limit); another, Pudsey, had to admit he had given names that were not in the prison logbook; P.O. Clark, the TV watcher, admitted that one of his entries was 'misleading', and it emerged that records were kept on loose sheets of paper which then went to the Governor to compile the log. But still they couldn't get it right! Lord Ross ordered that deletions be made in the records before they were shown to the jury.

The jury rejected 'wilful fire-raising' charges against all prisoners except Alan Brown who had pled guilty.

The Peterhead punishment block remains filled with prisoners in solitary; a new punishment block has been opened up; 6 prisoners remaining on dirty-protest in the old one. Peter Wardlaw, one of the 25 prisoners classified in Scotland as 'subversive' - is one of the 6 having been put into solitary in December.

FRFI July/August 84



This letter was sent to Edinburgh Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! who responded by organising protest action.

Dear FRFI

I am writing to ask for your help to call a picket on behalf of my brother, Peter Wardlaw and four of his fellow inmates, three of which are in Peterhead and the other one has been transferred to the Cages. As you know the dirty protest in Peterhead prison which Peter is a part of is in its sixth month and the repressive measures used by the state intensifying. The protest is reaching a serious level in which the prisoners are being denied all human rights.

A. Wardlaw

Solidarity with Peterhead Prisoners

The prison authorities are still trying to break the resistance of prisoners at Peterhead by singling out 'subversives'. Justice is systematically denied by these upholders of law and order who have yet to allow any prisoner legal representation before Boards of Visitors as ruled in 1983 by the European Court of Human Rights.

Brutality and injustice are censored. Prisoners, who have fought for and won the right to have FRFI and other progressive literature, receive them with everything about prisons cut out. Letters are frequently suppressed. On 7th September a prisoner was held down by 5 screws in front of an Assistant

Governor and 2 men in civilian clothing, and batoned over the head by another screw. He had complained about the suppression of 3 letters written to the Scottish Council for Civil Liberties.

Prisoners who have come off the dirty-protest are still being kept in indefinite solitary. Scottish prisons minister Ancrem has said that the new units are for 'subversives' such as them. These will be control units. Now at the Scottish Prison Officers Association Conference a delegate, who is a member of the Government's 'Standing Committee on Difficult Prisoners', proposed that the control regime include the withdrawal of food from protesting prisoners.

Public protest in support of Peterhead prisoners continues. FRFI and relatives organised a second picket of the Scottish Office in Edinburgh on Friday 28th September calling for:

- 1 an independent inquiry into developments at Peterhead
- 2 abolition of control units
- 3 end to isolation on political grounds of 'subversives'
- 4 end to censorship of letters and literature
- 5 end to restrictions and harrassment on visits
- 6 full rights of legal representation

The picket made its presence felt with militant chants between speeches by a prisoner's brother Alan Wardlaw, FRFI, Edinburgh Irish Solidarity Committee, Glasgow Irish Freedom Action Committee and Scottish Republican Socialist Party. Gateway Exchange withdrew its support at the last minute. This second picket of the Scottish Office involved more prisoners' relatives and drew support from passers-by who readily signed the petition for the Abolition of Control Units and for an end to Isolation on Political Grounds, and donated money to the campaign.

FRFI backs all initiatives for prisoners' rights and together with the SRSP is supporting a Glasgow Peterhead Prisoners' Support Committee set up by members of GIFAC, and a picket of the Scottish Office in Glasgow on Saturday 6th October.

FRFI October '84

Peterhead Prisoners resist Control Units

'There is now four segregation joints in this jail. This with 7 prisoners. The Ten Cell Unit with 2. The old punishment block with 4, and there's a guy locked up in a "unit" in the hospital wing for years. Add to this the 2 guys who are in the cages, then it is obvious all is not well...'

Peter Wardlaw: letter 12/12/84 to FRFI

Following the mass protest in January 1984, and the farcical show trial that followed. Peterhead prison has been through a major facelift with 2 new control units.

The press is back to its normal hack-journalism making the purpose-built Ten Cell Unit sound very homely - a long bungalow-style building, flush toilets and washbasins in every cell, conditions for the needs of particularly 'difficult' prisoners, a half-way house for them back to 'normal' circulation and the first phase of a modern prison to replace the grim old Victorian buildings where prisoners sleep in their clothes to keep out the freezing cold and the damp North Sea air... The reality of the new units is, as always, very different.

Scottish political prisoner Peter Wardlaw describes the regime:

'The regime in here is that the prisoners are kept in groups (maximum of 3) for "work, exercise and recreation". What it comes down to is

that once every 4 days, 2 maybe 3 prisoners can watch an old black-and-white TV for one-and-a half hours. Work comes one afternoon every fourth day. I participate in neither delight. Exercise is in yet another pen about 10 yards square - 3 walls and a cage-front. This pen and the specially built fenced-off pathway to it, are topped by many coils of razor-edge wire, though why all this is needed I do not know as we have a heavy escort of warders to and from the yard.

It's the same inside the hall as regards the warders. More than one prisoner for food or to slop out and there is 9 warders standing about. The public were told that they were going to ensure that the poor warders weren't going to be outnumbered again. Nothing was said that indicated that the prisoners were going to be outnumbered 3 to 1. The upshot is an unworkable regime has been created (one afternoon work etc, and not being able to go to the toilet if other prisoners are out in a group)...

Peter goes on to explain how work is used to degrade:

'...there is no work in here, just a ritual humiliation which is mandatory. For an hour and a half, once a week, 2 prisoners are allowed out and given mops and buckets etc. The work is the floor, the ablution arches and the hot-plate area...It is just one more way of making the prisoners submissive to the regime, and it also saves the warders a lot of work...To return to this "mandatory" work. This would normally be a passman's job. A job they wouldn't let me near in A-Hall. Instead I had to be marched to work in a "security" party to sit at a sewing machine. Now while I am in the punishment control regime it's alright for me to do such a job, when

'What it comes down to is that once every 4 days, 2 maybe 3 prisoners can watch an old black-and-white TV for one and a half hours. Work comes one afternoon every fourth day. I participate in neither delight.'

there are 9 warders hanging about delighted at my submissiveness. No fucking danger. I'd rather disrupt this hall until as long as they want to suffer it before they eventually have to move me.'

B-Hall is a stop-gap for other units in the new prison in 1990. The Scottish Office is planning a whole programme of 'alternative regimes' but prisoners in Peterhead are refusing to be guineapigs. 5 out of 8 prisoners in B-Hall are on protest refusing phoney-work and phoney-recreation.

FRFI February '85

Peter Wardlaw beats Control Units

At Peterhead Scottish political prisoner Peter Wardlaw has beaten 16 months of arbitrary political victimisation under Scots Prison Rule 36 ('Good Order & Discipline'). Half this time he has spent in the official punishment block, the rest in B-Hall struggling against the stiffling Control Unit regime, and going on no-work protest until let back into 'normal' circulation on 30th April 1985.

Control units are designed to crack people up. B-Hall is no exception - cardboard furniture, bright-yellow walls that induce splitting headaches, and enveloped in claustrophobic netting which serves no safety purpose as the upper-galleries are all closed off. The prison has attempted to break Peter's resistance by restricting his correspondence to one letter a week and making recreation impossible. They have failed.

Peter describes the mood now in the main prison:

'People just don't like this place any more. Not that they ever really liked it...There is hardly any aspect of it which isn't grumbled about now. The punishment is permanently full, half with long stays, the other half a regular turnover of "petty offences". At the wider level there is less and less opportunity for the State to offer the prospect of an early lib for some and their carrot halls are now beginning to bottleneck. It's all building up for the next bout of troubles.'

Underlining the importance of solidarity action:

'The move back was a wee bit of a victory as they weren't too keen on letting me out again. Obviously it goes right back to the first bit of outside support, among other things, which your organisation initiated and I thank you all for that.'

Peter is now struggling with the European Court of Human Rights which is attempting to ignore his longstanding grievances about censorship, visiting restrictions, and arbitrary detention under Rule 36 particularly in the vicious inhuman Cages at Inverness.

FRFI August '85

4. CLOSE THE CAGES NOW!

Scottish prisoners who refuse to submit to the intolerable regime in Scottish prisons face the threat of transfer to the notorious Inverness Cages. Peterhead prisoners involved in the major protests there have been sent to the Cages. William 'Toe' Elliott whom the jury acquitted in the Peterhead Protest Show-Trial in June '84, was immediately disposed of to the Cages.

The Scottish Office claims that the use of the term 'Cages' is 'totally inaccurate and creates a wholly wrong impression'. The description of the Inverness Unit as 'Cages' is accurate. A Daily Record reporter who spent half an hour in the Cages said:

'It was enough...it was cold bare and inhuman...ideal for animals but for a man an insult to society.'

The caged area where the prisoner is confined is only 3 metres by 2½ metres - 4 paces from side to side and 3 paces from the bars to the wall opposite. The so-called 'service' area is 3 metres by 2. The cage bars are an inch thick. The cage door can only be opened from outside the cell. There is no natural light. The window - in the 'service' area is thick and opaque, making it difficult to know whether it is day or night. The light burns 24 hours a day to complete the disorientating effect. The only things in the cell are a wooden seat for a bed, a plastic chamber-pot and a concrete bollard seat. There is also a punishment-cell in the unit - a tiny circular cell-within-a-cell in which prisoners are placed naked without facilities of any kind. 4 warders constantly watch every move of every prisoner.

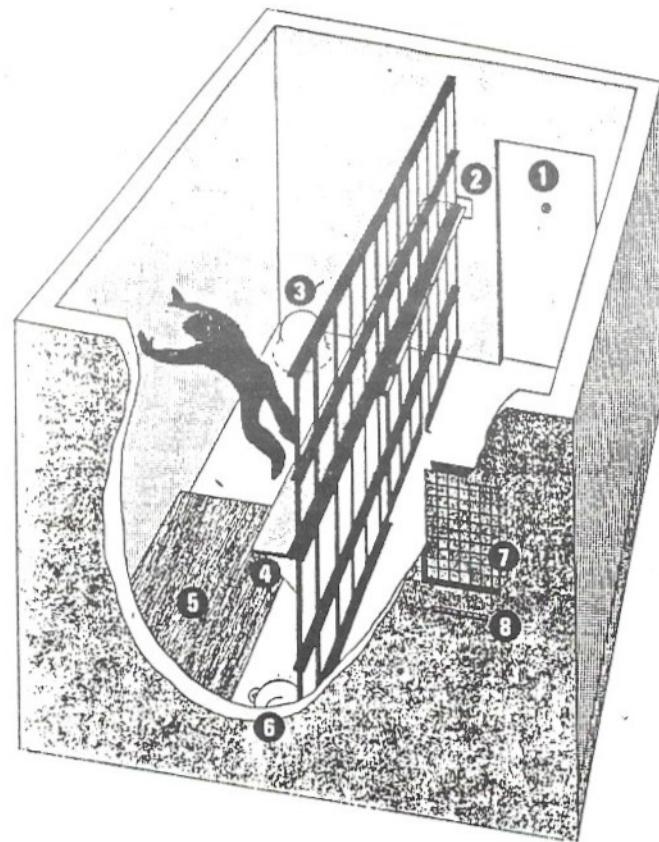
The Cage regime is pure psychological torture - designed to drive prisoners mad. Mick McCallum, presently on hunger-strike in Parlinnie prison, has described the regime:

'You are subjected to pressure from the moment you arrive there to the moment you leave... At night they put on a special machine which means you cannot shout at each other... It drowns you out. It is like living next to a waterfall.'

Of 13 prisoners known to have been in the Cages since 1978, one is now in the State Mental Hospital at Carstairs, 3 have been in the Cages twice, and one 3 times who is reported to be mentally ill.

The barbarity of the Cages is only the most extreme form of the barbarity of the Scottish prison regime. Scottish prisoners are fighting back in the Cages. Mick McCallum, who spent 6½ months in one 10 month period in the Cages, went on hunger-strike for 40 days.

FRFI March '85



THE CAGE: 1) Main cell door (steel) with spy hole. 2) Cage door can only be opened by device outside cell. 3) Concrete bollard seat (recent addition). 4) Metal shelf welded to cage front. 5) Wooden dais on floor as bed. 6) Chamber pot. 7) Double-glazed opaque window. Cannot be opened. Difficult to tell whether it's night or day. 8) Ventilation system, eight quarter-inch slats.

5. 'REFORM' AND 'REHABILITATION'

Review of 'The Pain of Confinement: Prison Diaries' by Jimmy Boyle
[Paperback £2.50 — Pan Books 1985/Hardback £9.95 — Cannongate Publishing 1984]

This is the record he has kept of his development as a sensitive, creative, caring person within a callous, bigoted and destructive society and prison system. 'The Pain of Confinement' is necessarily also a political account of the obstacles placed in his way as he has attempted to cast off his 'Hardman'/'Animal'/'Killer' image and gain acceptance in society. This is the story of the treatment of a man who has tried to make 'prison reform' succeed through his involvement with the Barlinnie Special Unit from 1973 to 1980, and of his experience of 'rehabilitation' in Saughton (1980 to '82), Scotland's 'Training Prison'. Also included are a number of brilliant letters of support received by him in the Special Unit, mainly from other working class

people who had run up against the law, as well as some examples of the all-too-familiar sensational gutter-journalism and character assassination directed against him.

'The Authorities were stretched to the limit...'

Taking up where his autobiography, 'Sense of Freedom', leaves off Jimmy Boyle explains his outlook when labelled 'Scotland's Most Violent Man' and sentenced to Life with 15 years minimum recommended:

'Like others I considered myself a young man with no hope or future. I was part of a group known as the living dead.'

To justify this and keep them in their place...

'The authorities would publically portray us as monsters and animals, but privately we knew that the degree of brutal violence exerted on us by gangs of prison officers was no different to that for which we were convicted. It was condoned by people turning a blind eye to it and the public not wanting to know.'

Despite this the prisoners fought back. Jimmy Boyle discovered that individual violence achieves very little without sympathy and support:

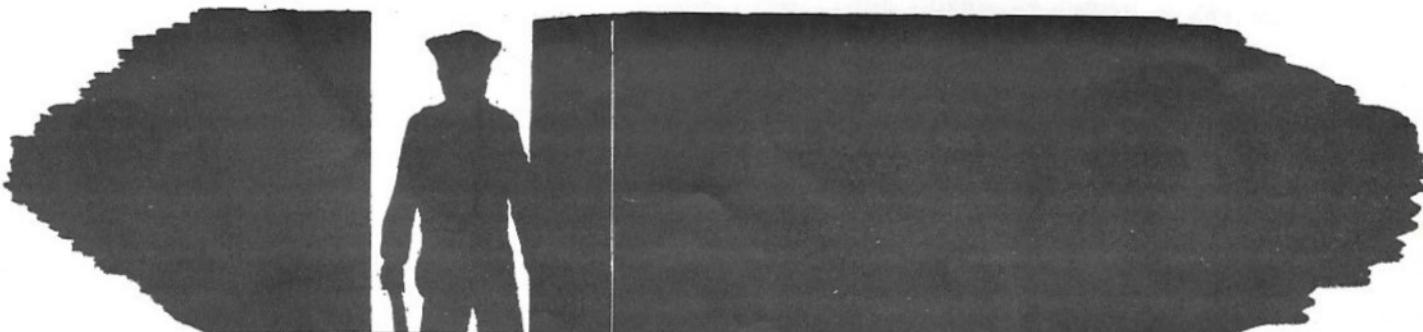
'We soon learned that the system which copes very well with individual troublemakers doesn't when these same individuals begin to organise and co-operate with each other.'

With the lack of any organised movement for prisoners' rights on the outside the authorities were, however, able to remove those whom they regarded as the 'ringleaders' at Peterhead and throw them into the Cages at Inverness. Boyle recollects that with his friend Ben Conroy he 'had attempted to organise the Prisoners' Solidarity Movement and paid the consequences for doing so...', as did 3 others.

The prison authorities soon found that they too had to pay certain consequences for their attempt to destroy the Prisoners' Solidarity Movement. The price was to be a limited experiment in prison reform - the Barlinnie Special Unit. They had to placate prisoners who could not be controlled by force, and provide a humanitarian face to a prison system tainted by the battle that broke out in the Cages. This way the prison system could be left untouched and the Cages forgotten - empty for a while but still there.

'The climax of this downward spiral took the form of a bloody riot in the Cages. Many prison officers and prisoners were injured. The doctors announced that I wasn't expected to last the night. Four of us were eventually charged with the attempted murder of six prison officers. It made no difference to any of us. I simply worked my body back to physical fitness ready for the next bloody occasion. I thought there was no alternative.'

Behind the scenes, outside our sphere of knowledge, the authorities were stretched to the limit. A number of prison officers in Inverness resigned in the aftermath of the riot. Prison staff in other prisons were saying they wouldn't have the hard core of us back. The pressure was on to get the Special Unit opened.'



The Special Unit

The Special Unit was created as a compromise, a safety-valve for a prison system unable to cope, and ready to explode at any time. With the escalating spiral of brutality met by prisoners' resistance the system found itself caught in contradictions. The new unit was the complete opposite of the prison system of which it was a part. The system exists to terrorise the working class into submission, but the unit has remained after its experimental period, as prisoners continue to resist and expose the system.

The Special Unit was brought into existence as a 'community' of a few reform-minded prison officers, who volunteered for this experiment, and a few prisoners like Jimmy Boyle who had faced everything the prison system could throw at them. This self-governing 'community' was to be based on trust, reason and creativity in contradiction to the main system based on mindless routine, distrust and fear, but it was set up as part of that system and had to accept the authorities' control over remission, parole, censorship, visits and goods coming in and out. In return the 'community' was allowed to legislate to allow the use of the phone to inmates operating self-censorship by not talking to the press etc, and to transform the punishment-cell into a weight-lifting room. Knowing that return to the main prison system would be a highly destructive move, likely to end in death, Jimmy Boyle and others were prepared to make the compromises needed to keep the Special Unit and themselves alive.

Relatively few prisoners however, or prison officers, volunteer for the Special Unit. Now that it has lasted for over a decade staff are grudgingly accepting of it. Scottish Prison Officers Association (SPOA) General Secretary John Renton has called for what he calls 'a spectrum of units' spread throughout the prison system, but with more of them at the Cages end of the 'spectrum' than resembling the Barlinnie Special Unit. The Special Unit is being used as a cover for generalised repression.

In the process of establishing the Special Unit prison officer Ken Murray, who played a leading role in promoting the atmosphere of trust and involvement by both staff and prisoners, found himself progressively shunned, vilified and kicked off the SPOA Executive, then threatened with withdrawal of SPOA membership for his lone stand in defence of the Special Unit. In his previous autobiography 'A Sense of Freedom' Jimmy Boyle explains how the incoming Labour Government encouraged this undermining of the Special Unit until like the Tories they too realised they could not get on without it:

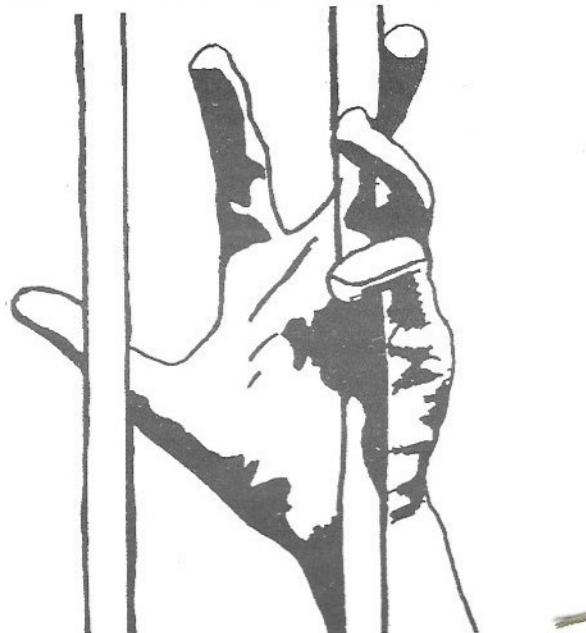
'all of us or most of us had more faith in the Labour Party as all our parents and friends were supporters. We finally ended up with Harry Ewing as Under Secretary which included Prisons.

There was a complete change of thinking from the top. The first blow came in the form of refusing me permission to speak to the Borstal Boys. The Scottish Prison Officers Association at the Annual Conference voted that prisoners should not be allowed to lecture to them. Understandable perhaps, but I hope these things will materialise in the future. The SPOA issued a statement saying that prisoners in other prisons were causing trouble to get into the Special Unit. Ken Murray, who was on the Executive Committee, disassociated himself from the statement saying it was untrue and made statements to this effect showing convincingly that what he said was true. He was removed from the SPOA Executive. Shortly after this the nucleus of staff who were solidly behind the unit concept found themselves being transferred for one reason or another. Ken Murray was put on the transfer list, and all of us, outside visitors to the unit included, came together and fought this all the way. Ken appealed and won. We were fighting for our very existence and we knew it. It now became clear I wasn't going to be allowed out on parole again. This was never said in words, but the Department were preparing us for tightening the place up, as they were saying it had got out of control, that prisoners had too much say in the running of the place.'

Staff like Murray who were sincere and willing to trust inmates found themselves constantly in a conflict with authority, passed over for promotion, and unable to readjust to the main system. Eventually attempts to get Murray transferred suc-

ceeded in 1980, under the new Thatcher Government. Jimmy Boyle was transferred to Saughton the day after. The Special Unit survived but the reform lobby they had come to represent was broken up, at a stroke.

Prisoners have been more understanding. Most prisoners reject the Unit as a ploy to buy off individuals, and refuse to sit down, under any circumstances, with prison officers. Still many maintain a high regard for Boyle and some others who have opted for the Unit and tried to pursue prison reform.



'Rehabilitation'

Boyle's diaries are the story of the new opportunities he found to develop his talents as a sculptor, author, community-member, and lover. The other side of this is his description of the removal of the mindless routine and brutality normally associated with prison life, and what could not be removed from it - 'the pain of confinement'. Confinement is a painful and scarring punishment in itself. Bourgeois society's mindless demands for revenge stands exposed, as does the hypocrisy of politicians like the late Frank McElhone (Boyle's MP) and Harry Ewing. They would mouth their support for the Special Unit but promote vicious slanders about Boyle so as to undermine his demands for reform and his chances of remission. Needless to say Scotland's most reformed man - one of the very few rehabilitated within the Scottish prison system and absolutely dedicated in his efforts to save others from his life of crime and punishment - was still made to serve his full recommended 15 years minimum sentence.

'The Pain of Confinement' - Jimmy Boyle's slow painful success story is also the story of some like Larry Winters whom the Special Unit couldn't help. Larry Winters had already been irreparably damaged by a society and prison system which then encouraged him to 'escape' through drugs, and in increasingly large dosages. Of course the victims got the blame for his death - Larry himself and those in the Unit who tried to help him. This became a drugs 'scandal' in the Unit, not a failure of the system.

Finally 'the Pain of Confinement' is the story of the prison system's farce of 'rehabilitation' at Saughton - Scotland's 'Training Prison'. Boyle's last 2 years were designed to destroy any illusions about the system's willingness to accept fundamental change:

'I was then asked if I had anything to say or to ask them. I told them that what they were telling me was that I have now to learn to adjust to Saughton Prison instead of adjusting to life outside... I mentioned the things I do here, shopping, art, visits, etc., and comparatively speaking what had they to offer. None of them could answer this. I was told that I would be put into a prison uniform and given 3 half-hour visits every 2 months and my mail would be censored.'

6. CORNTON VALE WOMEN'S PRISON

'A stranger who found himself within the grounds of Cornton Vale might think he had strayed on to a residential part of Stirling University.'
 (article Glasgow Herald 1981)

Appearances can be deceptive sometimes deliberately so!

It is a shocking indictment of bourgeois society that in the middle of winter some of the destitute are forced to smash windows and get sent down to prison to get a meal, and a roof over their heads. Reactionaries, of course, jumped to make political capital out of this misery and desperation, to dismiss prisoners' demands for humane conditions and basic rights. The gutter-press never stops slavering on about hotel accommodation for prisoners. Obvious nonsense when we still have Victorian prisons like Peterhead, and dungeons at Perth Prison carved out of rock in the 1840s.

But then there is Cornton Vale Women's Prison with its 'chalet-style buildings', 'rolling lawns and trim flower-beds' and white wrought-iron work. Despite these improvements in prison conditions described by the Glasgow Herald, very few are trying to break in. In 1981 numbers were falling off, standing at under two-thirds of capacity (116 inmates to a capacity of 212 beds).

About half the women in Cornton Vale are in for non-payment of fines, punished for being poor.

The Governor Lady Martha Bruce explained to the Herald

'We aim to meet the needs of the individual here, and to help them sort things out. The punishment is the deprivation of liberty.'

This sounds very enlightened. The crude brutality of men's prisons can make us forget that the deprivation of liberty and only one hour of visits per fortnight is certainly severe punishment for women who have children. About half the women in Cornton Vale are in for non-payment of fines, punished for being poor. The few weeks that most will spend is long enough for the debts to pile up, the husband to leave home, the kids to be taken into care and the house to be vandalised. However enlightened this women's prison philosophy sounds the reality is very different on the receiving end. The lack of visible brutality can blind us to the psychological torture that goes on. The regime of 'helping them sort things out' is a vital part of the punishment in women's prisons.

'Everything was clean and white - just like a hospital.'
 (Sheila Garvie, Cornton Vale's first prisoner interviewed in the Sunday Mail
 13/4/80)

Women prisoners have always been treated by bourgeois society as 'mad' rather than 'bad'. The prison regime attempts to 'treat' them, and immediately tries to encourage an emotional dependence on it.

'Officers would sit and chat and often a prisoner could find a member of staff in whom she could confide and discuss her problems.'

(Sheila Garvie in Sunday Mail)

All of this is to get you to do what they want. It's all very patronising. They call you by your first name, but you must call them 'Miss'.

Sometimes the regime bares its fangs. Women do get beaten up. More often they

are drugged - hit with the 'liquid-cosh' Largactil or put into a 'chemical straightjacket', on top of the daily dosages they are expected to take 'voluntarily'. Prisoners in all women's prisons complain of constant drowsiness, but especially after meals, another way of getting drugs into them.

'A girl who was classified a suicide risk started cracking up. She was dragged off by 8 or 10 screws to the observation pad (padded cell) in another block. She was back 2 days later, drugged up to the eyeballs - like a Zombie. She had been quite lively.'

(FRFI interview with Kirstin Crosbie)

FRFI has interviewed Soss Dance and Kirstin Crosbie who have been sent to Cornton Vale, at separate times, because of their political activities. Soss argues that all women prisoners, oppressed as women, are political prisoners. The Revolutionary Communist Group maintains there is a distinction between those who are in prison as 'political' prisoners because of a political struggle, and those who are 'social' prisoners - who would not be in prison but for their deprived position in bourgeois society, but are not involved in political struggle. To the extent that women prisoners are involved in struggle against their oppression as women, and as impoverished working class women, then they become political prisoners. By sending women involved in the Greenham struggle to prison, the state has brought other women prisoners into contact with political activity opposed to women's oppression, and discussion about the role of women's prison's in maintaining sex and class oppression. Cornton Vale now attempts to isolate political prisoners.

Soss

Soss and another woman appeared in court in July 1982 for non-payment of a £25 fine for 'Obstruction of the Highway' at Greenham Common. Given 3 months to pay or a week in Cornton Vale Women's Prison, they refused to pay...

'It is very much like a mental hospital. There's the appearance of it not being like a prison. They've fancy wrought iron bars on your cell windows. But it is very much a prison.'

It's worse than Holloway, although it doesn't have the same forbidding appearance - the big walls you see from the outside there. At Holloway we could mix with the other women prisoners, talk to them and go in and out each others cells, in association time - 2 hours - if there were enough staff on. We were not allowed to see any of the other prisoners. We were kept on a wing which we had to ourselves, in separate rooms. We asked the screws why this was, one said because what we were in for, i.e. we were seen as "political" prisoners.

The screws seem chosen for their appearance. They look like air hostesses, especially in their uniforms.

We were only allowed one quarter of an hour period of exercise on one day that we were there.

Work consisted of making soft toys or mopping the corridor, but we weren't allowed to associate with the other women while we were doing this. We sat with each other and a screw. This was the only time we were allowed out. All the doors were electronically-controlled. If you wanted anything you had to ring for them. There was a toilet in the cell.

Time really dragged because there was so little to do. They deliberately kept us apart and told everyone else to ignore us. The woman who'd come with us in the Blue Maria waved to us out of a window. When they saw her they told her not to look at us.

The whole experience is designed to wear you down, starting with the process of admission where they count everything in minute detail. You also have to stand naked in a small cubicle, and are given prison clothes, including pants and shoes. At Holloway we got 3 changes of clothes.

They make you feel that every time you ask for something it's a big deal. So you have to think what you should make an issue about, because when

you're dealing with them they make every small thing an issue. You've no sooner put in a Governor's application at Holloway about one thing, than you've got to put in another one, then you're a troublemaker. I had as little to do with them as possible.

The Assistant Governor, who was a man, said we should see a psychiatrist because we chose to go to prison. The day we were fasting for Hiroshima Day he deliberately had a strong delicious-smelling curry made that wafted in on us.

Having the choice of a fine or so many days in prison we decided when we would go in, and so exerted some control over the situation. Also there were pickets of the prison throughout our stay. So we had a lot of support.

The worst thing was knowing how it was for the other women, and that they were in for months or years. It was totally different for us having support and being in for such a short time.

All women prisoners are political prisoners. There are so few legitimate ways for women to make decent money independently of men that they have to resort to "crime" e.g. shoplifting, drugs and prostitution which are the most common reasons for women being locked up. When we were in Holloway 6 women climbed on the roof to protest about us being in and the whole prison system. Their banner read: "All women prisoners are political prisoners".

Soss Dance, October 1985

Kirstin Crosbie

The following interview was made by FRFI in April '85, and is courtesy of the Scottish Prisoners Support Committee.

In August 1980 Kirstin Crosbie and Mike Duffield were charged under the anti-Irish Prevention of Terrorism Act for selling copies of *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* which had an interview with an IRA Volunteer. Kirstin Crosbie was remanded to Cornton Vale and Mike Duffield to Barlinnie. A vigorous defence campaign mounted by the Revolutionary Communist Group and drawing in support of socialists, anti-racists, Republican sympathisers, councillors and MPs got a dropping of the PTA charge, and bail on the reduced charge of 'Breach of the Peace' a week later.

'They open the envelope from the court with your possessions, and log everything, absolutely everything - even the old bus ticket I had.

They log your cigarettes, the number, the make, also any matches and meticulously count how many are in the box. Everything that belongs to you now belong to them. They're taking that much time over it, and everyone behind thinks: "Why did she have to bring a box of matches?"

Then there's your name, age, date of birth, when you were arrested, any previous convictions - and loud enough so everyone can hear... I'm sure they must have had this already on a form from the court.'

URGENT! URGENT! URGENT!...

We need money urgently to pay for our work in support of prisoners.

We send FRFI to 155 prisoners in England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland (Six Counties and Twenty-Six Counties), USA, Netherlands and Italy. This costs well over £500 a year.

The Thatcher government has hundreds of millions of pounds to spend on building more prisons to lock up working class and oppressed people. Only you can make sure that we can carry on sending our political material to prisoners and so put up resistance to ruling class repression.

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...they bring you underwear - 2 sets and a pair of tights. And it's all second-hand. I refused to wear this underwear that other people had worn before.

I get left for ages sitting on the edge of this bath, while they discuss it. They tell me to take it, and I refuse again. Eventually they come back with brand new underwear!

Then there's the prison clothes - 2 dresses and a cardigan. The dresses Joan Collins wouldn't be seen dead in during her spell in prison. Pink cottony material, buttoning up the back and with a tie up the front - a plain straight thing that hangs on you, with short sleeves. The cardigan's unbelievable. mis-shapen, all the buttons missing, holes in the elbows, and a dirty pink colour. I wouldn't even have put it in a jumble sale.

The dress was too short on me, and some of the other women, theirs was way down around their ankles.

You get a big pair of clumpy shoes...and about 2 sizes too big for me. They don't cater for wee feet. Nothing fits.'

Then you go to get photographed...

'A guy stands out of view of the camera holding a board. I just keeping moving my head and covering my face with my hair, but eventually they just take a picture like that.'

Then there's the doctor...

'There was a male doctor and a female nurse. They're all benevolent and sympathetic. I got a lecture about "What did you do to end up in here?"

I just said, "It's none of your business. You're here to take my medical particulars."

They offer you the services of the psychiatrist, of the social worker, and if you refuse say, "Now are you sure you don't need to talk about this with someone? Have you not got any problems at home?"

Category-A

'"You're not allowed matches," she said, "you're a Category-A prisoner." I said, "I'm not a suicide risk."

She said, "No, you're a security risk. If you want a light you'll have to shout for me."

So you chain smoke because you have to call them "Miss" if you want their attention.

Having been classified Category-A, I had an escort of 2 screws. Other girls going off to do their sentences just had one screw each as they went off in a different direction. Apart from going to the toilet on the wing I was escorted everywhere by 2 screws, and all my movements logged, requests and everything, and every conversation with a screw noted down. I was in the cell next to the Chief Screw's room. She even showed me the book.

The Night Nurse was specifically directed to look in on me every 15 minutes, and apologised profusely because it's annoying. No matter how quietly you move it the spy-hole clicks.'

'...About 9 o'clock they put me back in the cell and gave me the free letter - just one doubleside. Then they came in and deliberately gave me a copy of the Prison Rules and said, "All prisoners must read this."

I knew this was odd. There were people outside campaigning for me. I was specifically told to read the Prison Rules and specifically told not to show them to anyone else.'

Prison Rules...

'I applied for a book in my property "Trotsky's History of the Russian Revolution", and was refused it. So I petitioned the Secretary of State

Then I requested my own clothes. Refused them, I petitioned the Secretary of State and got them after 3 days. I was the only person in the whole place who had my own clothes. When I went into the common-room everyone was astonished. I passed the Rule Book round and 3 requested their clothes the next morning.

The Governor told them that just because one person got them didn't mean all would get them, and if they wanted them they would lose association, so it was one or the other. And they told me this standing during association in my own clothes.

Most of the women were in for alleged "Breach of the Peace", non-payment of fines or "Drunk and Disorderly". Most breaches were domestic arguments and the like, petty stuff apart from the one serious offence.

Unlike with some of the convicted prisoners, there were no kids with the women on remand. It seemed most of the kids were being looked after by relatives. Very few took up the offer of social workers.

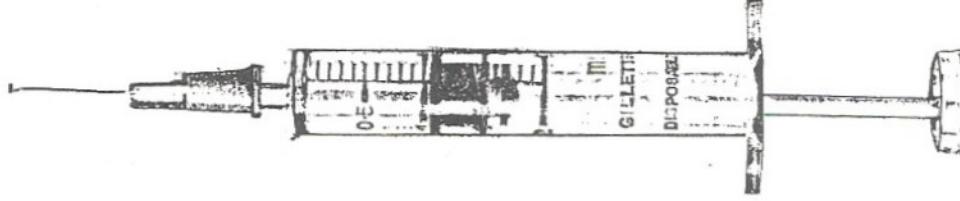
Visits...

'The visits are 15 minutes or half an hour.

Of course, I was Category-A. My visits were in a small room with 2 chairs on either side and a screw noting down every word of the conversation.

If at any time you discussed your case you were told not to, because the visit would be stopped. The only visit in private was with my lawyer.

Most people never got visits as travelling was too expensive or time consuming. None would see solicitors each week, and there was amazement that I got a visit from a lawyer. Most of the women had no perspective about getting away. Most didn't have weekly van trips, their remand hearings done without them. I got the impression some didn't actually know what was happening. It seemed like they were remanded for a couple of months and just waiting for their trial. Just waiting...'



7. CARSTAIRS

The institutions of bourgeois society cannot be allowed to hinder the quest for profit. The post-war Labour Government and the Tory administration that followed were able to expand the health service by using cheap immigrant labour from Britain's colonies and ex-colonies. Now 'health minister' Fowler is cutting back, appointing accountants to take charge of hospital administration.

There is little profit to be made from curing illness through the NHS. Convalescence generally has to be paid for through insurance schemes and private medicine. Working class people are being sent home before their time. Thousands find their jobs in jeopardy as GPs no longer find the time to sign sick lines for under a week's sick leave from work. Others find themselves thrown into institutions unwillingly, because of lack of welfare payments, and the deprivation that exists in working class communities. This affects children, the old, the sick and infirm - a large section of the population, also a great many working class people who appear before the courts, and find themselves remanded in prison until their case comes up. The legal system which revolves around money and status has no time for them, and the duty court solicitors who deal with these cases on a production line basis, seldom summon up the interest to make a decent 'not guilty' plea and bail application.

Political control is all important to the survival of the profit system, and it will cut into its present profits to provide the repression it considers necessary. While clothing and heating allowances are being cut back on, hundreds of thousands of pounds are being spent on DHSS snooper squads, money which could reap a massive return for the government in investigating and prosecuting tax evaders. Most years do not see a single tax evader brought before a Scottish court. The point of spending money on repression is to terrorise the working class into accepting the working and living conditions on offer.

Under this system many welfare institutions, psychiatric hospitals in particular, take on the aspect of prisons, and medical science is twisted to justify this. In the 19th century Lombroso attempted to show that 'criminals' could be clinically defined, and even had different shaped skulls. Since then pseudo-scientific theories have been cobbled together to justify existing degrading subhuman treatment of prisoners and mental patients, and drugging, electroconvulsive treatment, and in the USA brain-surgery and lobotomies, have been introduced on a massive scale.

In the 1970s many of these theories were debunked, and even exposed as having been based on fraudulent experiments and studies. 'Psychopathy' was no longer recognised as a treatable illness, and hundreds of people labelled 'psychopath' had to be released or transferred out of psychiatric hospitals. Still, many also remain. At Carstairs State Hospital, 50 staff were cut, and 30% of beds currently remain unused.

Recently, in September '84, the Scottish Prison Officers Association decided to raise a fuss about this. Carstairs is an opportunity to make big money for the 'nurses' there, with its high staff/patient ration (1.28/ 1). The SPOA is allowed to represent staff because the state recognises Carstairs as an important weapon in its arsenal of repression. Prison Officers are the most highly paid group of manual employees, of course, (earning an average of £257 per week in 1984) while ordinary nurses come near the bottom. Many of the Carstairs 'nurses' also belong to the same masonic lodge. Double shifts are quite common at Carstairs. This cannot be in the interests of patient care.

Carstairs claims to cure many of its inmates, and this seems to be proven by the large number who do get transferred out elsewhere. It goes about it in a strange way - pumping them full of drugs and leaving them to sit around with nothing to do all day. For 6 years - from 1976 to 1982 - all 'ground-parole' for all inmates was banned. 'Ground parole' is walking around the grounds within the high perimeter fences, under the supervision of the staff.

At the present time the government is spending money on adapting the psychological methods of repression pioneered at Carstairs for use in the main system. Psychologists and psychoanalysts are employed on the Scottish Office Working Party on Alternative Regimes (control units). Carstairs already has its own control units - 2 Ten Cell Units which range from padded cells through to fully-furnished rooms. Taking a leaf out of this book Peterhead has opened its own Ten Cell Unit. Barlinnie much famed for the liberal Special Unit regime, also has a control unit based on extreme sensory deprivation, and allegedly uses as much Largactil as does Carstairs. Largactil is a drug known as 'the liquid cosh'.

For the time being the government is keeping Carstairs running under capacity. It remains a bogey to terrorise prisoners who fight back. As the crisis deepens we can expect it to come back into full use again. The system that does not pay to ensure people get their rights and cuts back on community service programmes and other alternatives to imprisonment, is slamming more and more people into detention centres, prison and psychiatric hospitals, some of them 'Sectioned' away under the compulsory detention Sections of the Mental Health Acts. Some are actually lost by this system of 'care' and 'treatment'. In April 1985 FRC interviewed a man who had just spent the last 8 months in psychiatric hospitals as a result of not paying a £2-60 taxi fare.

The interview covers John's period of imprisonment first in an 'ordinary' mental hospital, then in Carstairs, explaining how he was disposed of and left to rot.

Interview with John

FRFI: How was it you got sent to Carstairs?

John: I was in the Leverndale (psychiatric hospital) and rared up after 6 months because there was no sign of getting out.

FRFI: So how did you get sent to the Leverndale?

John: I didnae hae the money to pay the taxi, and when went out to my ma's house she wasnae in...

FRFI: Who did the psychiatric report on you for the court?

John: I don't know who the guy was. They came to see me when I was in Barlinnie - 2 psychiatrists - they didn't diagnose anything. I'd have rather had the nick. At least you know when you're getting out and none of this forcing you to take drugs you don't want. To me it was like a bad dream. I'd never had any mental illness before.

FRFI: What was the Leverndale like?

John: I wore my own clothes. There was nothing taken off me. They gave £10 a week for nothing. I was in a big ward with about 18, sometimes only a dozen. People were coming and going all the time. It was OK in there, it was just the fact that I was locked up. To me it was just a gaol.

FRFI: What were the activities you could get involved with in there?

John: Nothing - just television and Scrabble. You could go out for a walk during the day in the grounds. I was bolting from them all the time. I got away a couple of times but they kept running after me.

FRFI: What were the nurses like?

John: To me they were screws. A couple of times I asked them if I could go out for a walk and they waived me away as if I was rubbish and I had a go with them. It wasnae friendly stuff - like screws - and when I went to Carstairs that's what they were, because they come under the Scottish Prison Officers Association - and they were forcing me to take this Largactil.

FRFI: Was there any attempt to cater for individual patients' needs?

John: No, everyone was on this Largactil. But I was refusing it and throwing it at them and they were pulling me down and giving me injections. You can be lying on it for a minute after it and you just hit the deck. It's knockout stuff. I was getting them all the time - nearly every day. It would put you to sleep till the next morning - sometimes in the middle of the afternoon...with me getting it that regular I was building up a resistance to it.

FRFI: How did you get sent to Carstairs?

John: I went to the dentist and got impressions for false teeth, and went back. The nurse with me said, "You're no getting false teeth - you've cost the hospital about £80 already", which was a load of rubbish. So they took me back to the ward, and told me to come back in another month...So I was a bit annoyed, so I smashed one window. I was trying to get out. I got caught smashing one and then I smashed another five...'



They gave me an injection. I went to sleep for a couple of hours...woke up...had a go at one of the nurses...they dragged me down...another injection...took me into the ambulance and strapped me down and took me to Carstairs. I was considered violent.

FRFI: What does Carstairs look like?

John: It's like a concentration camp to look at - even in the grounds walking about it, that's what it looks like... In the time I was there, there wasnae any exercise. You don't get out for half an hour's walk round the grounds like a gaol. You're locked up for 24 hours a day since the Mone and McCulloch incident you've set the place right back (2 inmates who escaped in November 1976 killing 3 people).

...There's a big fence - about 3 fences and all these wee buildings - about 30 patients in each, and it's split East and West by the railway line. There's only about 250 people in Carstairs and they're talking about transferring them from the gaols to keep the jobs open...it's really ridiculous.

FRFI: They're talking more and more about psychology and psychiatry for prisoners now.

John: Aye, but the point is they're no interested in psychology or psychiatry because there's nae cure for it - it's just control - they wanna control.

'They're no interested in psychology or psychiatry because there's nae cure for it — it's just control — they wanna control people, manipulate and control — so they're filling them up with this gear.'

people, manipulate and control - so they're filling them up with this gear. So's that people, they end up, they're just zombies - which is what they're doing at Carstairs. You see guys up there, they've been up there for 20 years. They've got these big fat stomachs. They're products of this system.

FRFI: What's it like inside?

John: They're cells, just cells...wee units - there's nae wards, but they call them wards. There's a bed, a wee bit of wood stuck to the wall for a wee table. That's it...

FRFI: A student nurse has given me a more flattering description of the ordinary cells, and has also described a control regime where you're meant to work up from a bare cell to one that's well furnished.

John: It's a wee bit of bribery, just a load of crap. But there's guys in there have got wee television sets. I suppose that's what they're talking about. But that's only the likes of a guy that's running around making the tea - the nurses tea and stuff. But if you're mentally ill and a bit simple you'll get nothing, you know. If you cannae dae nothing then you'll get nothing. To me it was just a gaol. Worse than the worst gaol I've been in. It's murder!

FRFI: What's the attitude of most of the inmates?

John: Most of them, they just sit and vegetate because they're full of this Largactil gear. They're full of it all the time. They're just sitting around getting made into cabbages.

FRFI: Did you see nurses sitting down with the patients?

John: No. There's none of that. There's two sides, just the same as the gaol.

FRFI: What's the daily routine at Carstairs?

John: You get up in the morning at 7 o'clock. Everyone gets up at the same time. You just get up automatically. Either that or you get dragged out.

You go in and get a wash, and then a shave with an electric razor, and everyone lines up to get a shave. Before you go back to your room, you go to this other room and get your other clothes. You go into the room and put them on, and then go into breakfast.

FRFI: No break in the routine?

John: It's the same every single day - well on Friday they give you a tin of Brasso and tell you to brasso the door - the wee brass bits, the handle and all that. And they gi' you this big bumper thing, this big machine to dae all the flair - the place is spotless. To me it was mair like a Detention Centre than a hospital - really strict. I remember thinking, if they would only take me off this Largactil stuff there I could handle it, because what was worrying me was I'd be ending up like that - a big fat man.

At 7.30am you've to clean your room, brush it out, then you watch TV. They come round and inspect it - round with the finger looking for dust just like the Detention place.

Then we went and watched the tele till dinner time. The food was good - better than any institution I've been in - plenty of it, 3 courses. I don't want to condemn the place altogether. But I mean, to me, it was just like the Detention Centre. Some guys in there are just cabbages, and they expect them to go around cleaning rooms and all that. They cannae dae it!

FRFI: What happened to get you released?

John: Once you get into Carstairs, you're told you're in there for an indefinite period. The 'Section' changes. One guy had been in there for 27 years...

After 2 weeks they took me off Largactil. They're mair professional than the 'normal' psychiatric hospital. After a fortnight the Charge Nurse said they wouldnae be keeping me. He would tell the doctor there was nothing wrong wi' me. It takes a fortnight to diagnose...

I was there a month, and I saw this doctor - and said there's nothing wrong with me. All I did was smash a couple of windows in Leverndale.

She said: "You wouldnae get put in here for that."

I said: "Well that's the case."

She said: "Look, I've no got the power to discharge you."

After a visit from (Dr) Sarah Boyle of the Gateway Exchange, who had a word with one of the doctors, John was called before a Board and released having spent 6 months at Leverndale and 2 months at Carstairs.

CONCLUSION: SUPPORT PRISONERS' STRUGGLE!

Prisoners have no illusions about the impartiality of the bourgeois class biased courts. They have doggedly demanded their rights to be heard in the Sheriff Courts, the Court of Session and European Court of Human Rights. They have persistently challenged the arbitrary power of warders, governors and government ministers and rejected the farcical Visiting Committees which rubber-stamp brutality and repression. Prisoners have resisted and stood together against arbitrary and indefinite detention under Rule 36. The authorities have had to look for new forms of brutality and repression - control units - psychological torture.

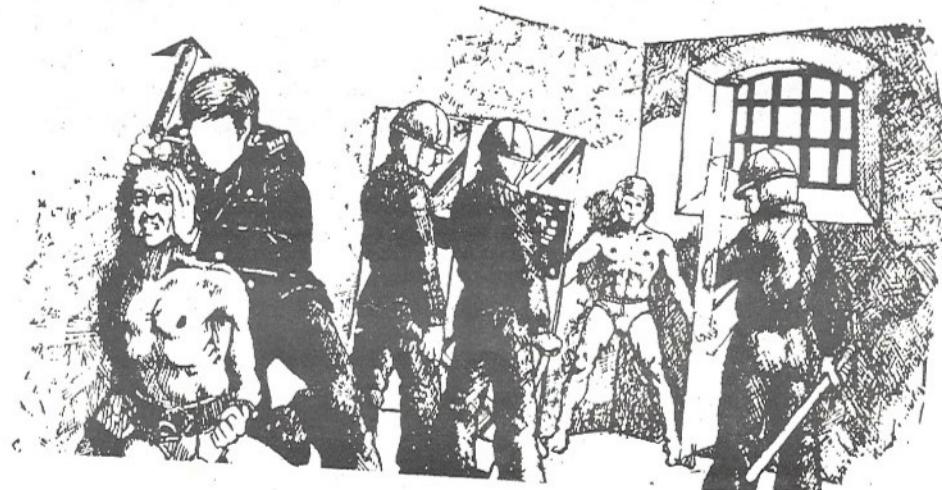
1979 saw 2 rooftop protests at Peterhead against the inhuman conditions there. The second, in August, followed the rejection of an application to the European Court of Human Rights. Letters had been smuggled out about the holding of men in the 'Zombie' (punishment) cells for 22 and 23 hours a day for anything up to a year. Prisons Minister Malcolm Rifkind decided to visit Peterhead - to whitewash conditions there. He was upstaged the day before he arrived by prisoners who smashed up the Zombie Cells (2 layers of 20 cells altogether) and demonstrated on top of them before the assembled press.

Fightback has continued at Peterhead. In 1982 Dirty Protests continued for most of the year. In October '83 a rooftop protest was followed by escape attempts. The January '84 Protest which destroyed A-Hall was followed by dirty-protests against brutality and isolation, and the exposure of the farcical Show-Trial at Peterhead Sheriff Court. 1984 also saw a rooftop protest at Barlinnie. Leading bourgeois newspapers the Scotsman and the Glasgow Herald were forced to debate the instability of the prison system, and William Stephen chairing the Scottish Prison Officers Association Conference in September was obliged to remark that dirty-protests were now a feature of Scottish prisons 'from Peterhead to Cornton Vale'.

The prison authorities have been forced to make some concessions on conditions - particularly on visits and proposals for integral sanitation in cells in Peterhead. This is part of a massive fob-off operation involving Scottish Office 'Working Parties' and scripted press tours smoothing the introduction of control regimes under the guise of 'improvement', 'modernisation' and 'providing for individual needs'. The Ten Cell Unit opened in 1984 at Peterhead is the first phase of a whole new prison. Anyone with any illusions about 'improvement' and 'reform' should look at the notorious death-camp at Glenochil which has been taken as a model for Youth Detention Centres in England and Wales.

Applications to the European Court of Human Rights have been held up for as long as possible. For Mick McCallum this has meant returning to Peterhead from the Cages to find his case papers all burnt. The Government faced with Frank McPhie's successful case for compensation for lost remission chose to settle out of court at the last minute rather than face public humiliation and condemnation. More recently however the bringing of a case of 'mobbing and rioting' against selected protesting prisoners was used to place legal restrictions on discussion of events surrounding the January '84 Protest at Peterhead.

Besides the censorship of letters and literature, warders listen into discussion between prisoners and their visitors. Prisoners on remand are told they cannot discuss their case with anyone but their lawyers, but few see their lawyers from one month to the next. The fight against censorship - for unrestricted rights of communication, and of legal and political representation is central to the prisoners' struggle for all basic human rights. If the authorities get



away with this they can get away with anything.

Publicity about what goes on in prison is invaluable as has been acknowledged by the Scottish Home & Health Department itself in its 'Prisons in Scotland Report 1983':

'August 1983 saw the introduction of an easing of the standing orders which restricted those with whom prisoners were free to communicate. This was generally welcomed, but a few prisoners were not slow to take advantage of this change to write to the press (and those who would, they believed, immediately communicate with the press), making allegations against staff. In these allegations staff were never named which made it impossible for them to take action to prove that the allegations were wholly without foundation.'

Far from being welcomed by the Scottish prison authorities these changes had been strongly resisted. Prisoners in Scotland found themselves denied the benefits of the Strasbourg Court of Human Rights' ruling against censorship which had been won by prisoners in English gaols in 1983. That summer Peterhead prisoners Peter Wardlaw and Ricky Wrethman had to go on hunger strike for at least a month for the right to receive *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* and other progressive literature. The prisoners' hunger strike was backed up by written protests from the outside. Since then prisoners have received FRCI, but still have had all articles on prisons cut out.



Publicity and propaganda about the nature of the prison system has an effect, and the authorities are very sensitive to it. Throughout the Show-Trial of the protesting prisoners at Peterhead in 1984, warders sat making notes -something the public are forbidden from doing. During a public meeting in April '85 calling for a Public Enquiry into Glenochil, the Governor sat quietly and anonymously spying on the proceedings.

The failure of the organised labour and trade union movement in this country to pay any attention to the prison struggle has allowed the state to get away with 7 deaths in the Glenochil complex, 6 of them within 3½ years. The storm in the Scottish media which has followed the 7th death - Derek Harris - has been due to the persistence of the Scottish Council for Civil Liberties and individual professionals involved with the dead youths - combined with a background of propaganda about the violence of the prison system. The importance of propaganda and agitation was made forcibly at the Peterhead Show-Trial by the prisoners who organised to defend themselves, and again in January and February '85 by Mick McCallum who went on hunger strike in Barlinnie against brutality, censorship and closed visits - a campaign supported by prison pickets. This raised the issue of deaths in prison as a campaigning issue, where before it had only been a cause for 'concern'.

Agitation in support of prisoners in Britain has so far been on a very small scale but already there have been some small successes. Peter Wardlaw, a Scottish political prisoner, wrote to FRFI in June '85 about his move back on 30th April into the 'normal' regime at Peterhead after spending 16 months in solitary and in the B-Hall control regime:

'The move back was a wee bit of a victory as they weren't too keen on letting me out again. Obviously it goes right back to the first bit of outside support among other things which your organisation initiated...'

This protest activity included coverage in FRFI and 2 pickets of the Scottish Office in Edinburgh drawing prisoners' relatives and political groups concerned with prisoners rights, followed up by street events in the centre of Glasgow.

Peter Wardlaw's sister Sally described the immediate impact of this work in a letter to FRFI, after the first picket:

31/7/84

'Dear comrades,

On behalf of Peter Wardlaw and his fellow inmates at Peterhead.

Our family would like to express our sincere thanks for all the hard work that was put in to make the picket possible. And for the solidarity that was shown especially under the atrocious weather conditions.

The picket can be seen at this early stage as a minor victory, by the fact that on the following day when we visited Peter, we were not kept waiting. And indeed Peter was brought up a couple of minutes earlier than the other prisoners. Also the visit ended at normal time, whereas recent visits have been shortened by about 10 minutes.

Although we forgot to ask Peter about the handcuffs, whilst he was crossing the yard when leaving we noticed his hands were free. He waved to us.

Once again many thanks.

Sally B

The organised labour and trade union movement has turned its back on the prisoners' struggle. Concentrating on so-called 'economic' issues at the expense of defending democratic rights needed to continue struggling against exploitation and oppression. Few apart from the prisoners themselves and their relatives have been concerned to do anything to advance the prison struggle, and they have been restricted to conducting the best legal campaign they can get, political organisation being, as yet, virtually non-existent.

The organised labour and trade union movement has turned its back on the prisoners' struggle, concentrating on so-called economic issues at the expense of issues of the democratic rights needed to continue struggling against exploitation and oppression... This can now change.

This can now change. Many individuals galvanised into action by the Miners' Strike, have seen striking miners thrown into gaol, and have come to see prison as a weapon of class rule, as the ruling class has attempted to isolate and crush resistance. In England, Irish prisoners of war and black prisoners have given a lead to political organisation and education in the prisons, and solidarity on the outside - a lead the imprisoned miners took up.

Scotland has seen few political prisoners, as yet, and this development, when it comes, will have a major impact on the struggle and on solidarity activity. With the deepening crisis and attacks on the working class and oppressed, more and more will come to see the importance of the prison struggle. It

will be possible to involve large numbers in solidarity activity. Maintaining contact with prisoners is vital. We must also expose what goes on inside. Finally, we must organise the broadest possible support for prisoners in their struggle for basic human rights.

FRFI has responded to calls from prisoners and their relatives, and from other groups concerned to draw attention to developments in Scottish prisons. The State is highly organised and requires a united and well organised response. A movement for prisoners' rights must be built. Communists work in this direction, calling for a dismantling of the prison system and for the greatest possible unity between different groupings and individuals around particular issues and for particular demands as they arise. FRFI has attended and expressed its support for meetings calling for a Public Enquiry into Glenochil, while itself raising the call for the closure of Glenochil and the mounting of an ongoing campaign for prisoners' rights.

A movement for prisoners' rights can be built. Prisoners have already organised to take the fightback on to the rooftops and into the court-rooms - refusing to be silenced and refusing to accept cover-ups. The increasing number of political prisoners, such as the gaoled miners, and their friends and relatives, will aid the formation of campaigns for prisoners' rights, based amongst the oppressed. What is needed is support and organisation on the outside to match the prisoners' resistance. FRFI and the Revolutionary Communist Group call on all concerned with democracy for the working class to support prisoners and publicise their struggle for basic rights.

Lift the Lid on Scottish Prisons! Support Prisoners' Rights!

JOIN THE RCG!

Take the side of all those struggling against imperialism - whether in Tottenham, Belfast or Soweto - Join the RCG!

A movement must be built in Britain in solidarity with the struggling peoples of Ireland, South Africa, Palestine, Central America. Help us do this - Join the RCG!

A movement must be built here in Britain which stands with the oppressed fighting racism, repression and poverty. Help us build this movement - Join the RCG!

A movement must be built which challenges and defeats the treachery of the opportunist leaders of Britain's Labour and trade union movement - Join the RCG!

Help us build a revolutionary anti-imperialist alternative. Work with us in our anti-racist, Irish solidarity, anti-apartheid and other struggles - Join the RCG!

I wish to join/receive more information about the RCG

Name _____

Address _____

Return to FRFI, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX tel _____

As the crisis of British imperialism deepens, and the ruling class increases its attacks on the working class and poor, prisons will become more and more crowded with the victims of these attacks. Prisons have always been used to discipline the poor and punish those who fight back against the system. Today Scottish prisons are in crisis — from the long-term prison in Peterhead to the death-camp at Glenochil, the brutality of the prison system is being exposed for all to see.

This pamphlet documents the brutality and injustice of the Scottish prison system, and points to the need to support prisoners from the outside while they struggle against that system from the inside.

As Thatcher plans more repressive laws, greater police powers and more prisons, all those who support democratic rights and are opposed to state attacks on the working class must unite — to support the struggle of prisoners against an inhumane and barbaric system.

FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

